

Jersey Beat

Issue #60 Summer 1997

\$2



H2O

**BUSH
TETRAS**

SWEETBELLY FREAKDOWN

Lunachicks

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WE Festival Report

LOLLAPALOOZA

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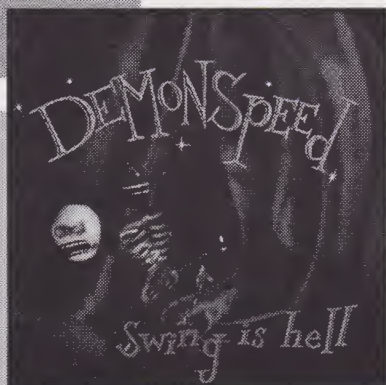


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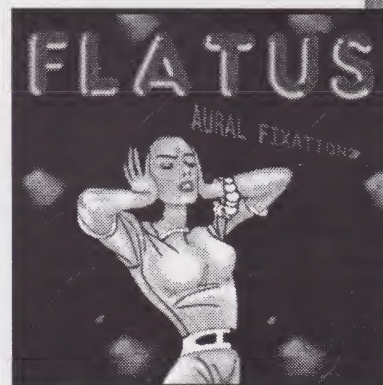
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"Somewhere there's danger, somewhere there's injustice, and somewhere else, the tea is getting cold. Come on, Ace, we've got work to do." - Dr. Who

Those words - the last lines of the final episode of the BBC's *Dr. Who* - struck a particularly resonant chord with me when I recently found them in a book. What a fine way to end a series that in television terms lasted several lifetimes - without a hint of finality.

I've been thinking a lot about endings lately. People die, friends move, relationships sputter and fade away. It's part of growing older, I guess; you start spending more time thinking of things you've lost rather than looking forward to what you're going to find tomorrow. That's a big part of why I keep publishing *Jersey Beat*; as long as there's a next issue to think about, I always have one foot in the future.

So first, a little about what's going on here at the zine. I am proud to announce that this issue introduces the first installment of Ben Weasel's new column, "Video Eye," in which Ben (one of the few people I know who's a bigger couch potato than I am) will comment on the boob tube. We're also adding new opinion columns and, with ska becoming an increasingly popular part of the punk scene, this issue sees the debut of "Them's Skankin' Words," a new ska column by Chuck Wharton.

Our last issue, which commemorated *Jersey Beat's* 15th anniversary, was an enormously gratifying time for me, capped by the anniversary party and show we put on at The Saint in Asbury Park on March 29. It was one of the best nights of my life, and my sincere thanks go out to everyone who helped make it happen, most especially the bands, and Peter Mantas and Scott Stamper of The Saint.

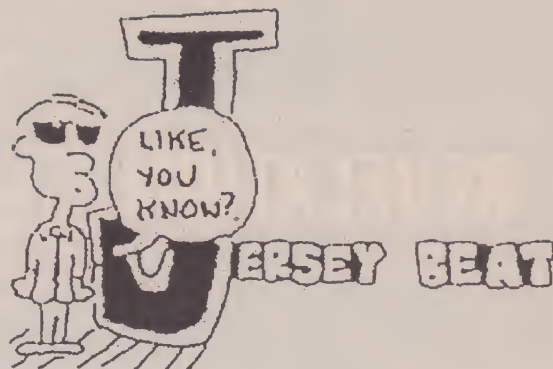
With all the anniversary hoopla, I was even interviewed a few times, which forced me to come up with some answers about why I've been doing this for 15 years, and what I've learned. First, the reasons why I continue to publish this zine have almost nothing to do with why I started it in the first place. My goal was never money; the fact that the zine is self-sustaining these days is gratifying, but if I still had to dip into my own pocket to publish, I would... and gladly. The satisfaction of producing something every few months that is uniquely and unqualifiedly my own continues to be a big reason why I still publish. But nowadays, I get as much or more pleasure out of cajoling some talented friend or stranger into trying their hand at contributing, and watching with enormous pride as that fan turns into a writer.

And then there's the pleasure - make that the joy - of stumbling, unexpectedly, on some new band that just blows my mind, and having the means to share that discovery with other people. That's what fanzines are all about, in the end. And that is why anything that brings a sense of community to this cut-throat, splintered, fractious, underappreciated, and overcrowded little demimonde of ours is so precious. So if this issue has a theme, it's "Community," as we salute anything & everything that helps bring bands, fans, zines, clubs, labels, and anybody else involved with the pursuit of cool music together. Keep that in mind when you read about the WE Festival, the Asbury Park Music Awards, and our first Jersey Beat Night at The Saint, and some of the things that the musicians we've interviewed in this issue had to say about promoting a scene and working with other bands. And then think about whether you'd like to be a part of something like that too.

Yeah, I know, the scene around here isn't what it could be. Bands don't respect each other. Fans don't support new music unless it's being shoved down their throats by the mass media. And most of the clubs seem like they're only in business for the chance to screw everybody over. It's a long way from perfect... but heck, we've only been at it for 15 years. Give us time.

Come on, Ace, we've got work to do.

- Jim Testa, July, 1997



Issue #60

Summer, 1997

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Jim Testa

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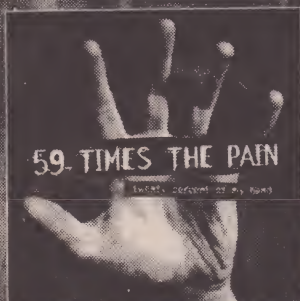
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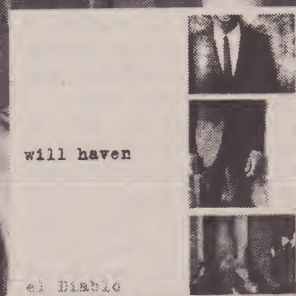
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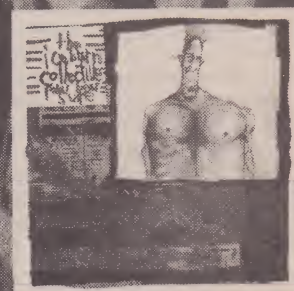
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GUEST EDITORIAL

HARDCORE RULES... AND HOW TO BREAK THEM

NITWITS IN THE CROWD

by Denis Sheehan

If you are reading this column then you undoubtedly enjoy attending punk rock shows. I went to my first show back in 1982. Since then I have been to hundreds of shows and seen plenty of odd and bizarre events take place. Not only do I go to these things for great music and a little slam dancing (I refuse to refer to slam dancing as moshing), I go to see how people act. Most of the time I completely forget how the band was, but remember what everybody was doing at the show. When I go to a punk show, I often find that my attention has been diverted from the bands to the crowd. More like the nitwits in the crowd. Believe me, I know other people at these shows have probably looked at me thinking that I was a nitwit. We all have done stupid or embarrassing things, including me. I have just decided to write what I have seen or been a part of.

1995-The Ramones were playing in Boston at the Avalon Ballroom.

This show was reported to be their last in Boston (it wasn't), so it was a full house. I arrived

at the show midway through the opening act's set. I have no idea who these guys were. After they finished, the lights came on and music was being played on the sound system. Standing next to me was a guy around the age of 25. This guy was a punk rock know-it-all. He was blurting out facts about every band and every show ever played in the United States. While he was talking away, I wondered if he knew what he was talking about. At one point he stopped talking and started shaking his head with a disgusted look on his face. Then he starts talking to everyone around him saying, "Listen to this song everybody. Another Green Day rip-off. Why is there no original music any more? One band breaks the mold and every band follows. Typical music industry!"

I looked at this guy in disbelief. The guy then starts yelling "Green Day wanna be!" He starts waving his arms up and down trying to get people to join him. Somebody finally threw a drink at him. The guy turns around and walks away. I notice on the back of his jacket was a small picture of Sid Vicious. I now knew this guy was full of crap. That Green Day rip-off song was The Sex Pistols' "No Feelings."

November '92 - A friend and I were walking to catch the Rollins Band at The Channel. We were about a mile from the venue when out of nowhere somebody smashed me across the back of the head with something. I was out cold. My buddy was not so lucky. Three guys beat the snot out of him. They kicked him in the face, knocking out five of his teeth, broke his jaw and nose. We never saw it coming.

While we laid unconscious on the ground, the cowards stole our money, leather jackets and our tickets to the show. I later woke up in the hospital so the rest of this story comes from friends who were meeting us at the Channel. After the morons stole our stuff, they wore our jackets to the Rollins show. When our friends saw these guys with blood all over them wearing our jackets (both of our jackets have distinguishing artwork all over them), they knew something was wrong. My friend overheard the guys bragging about what they had just done. After about an hour of talking with the cowards, my friend offered to buy them all a beer and asked for their licenses. The three idiots handed them over. My friend then walked over to the cop on duty and told the story and gave the licenses to him. The three guys were arrested and went to jail on other unrelated charges.

May '96 - This personal favorite took place at a bar in Burlington, Vermont. I was doing guitar work for a friend's band called Elbow Grease. I can't play the guitar, but I sure can string one. About 45 minutes before they went on, I was at the bar unsuccessfully trying to pick up a chick. This guy wanders up next to me and introduces

The band stops playing and the lead singer stands in between the two combatants and says "Come on guys, I'm catching some bad vibes down here. Lets calm down." The singer stops and looks at the drunk. The drunk shakes his head and mumbles "Ya, ya, ya all right." Then he yells, "Here's a finger in your eye!" This jerk buried half of his index finger on his right hand into the singer's eye socket. It happened so fast. It was absolutely the most painful looking thing I've ever seen happen to anyone.

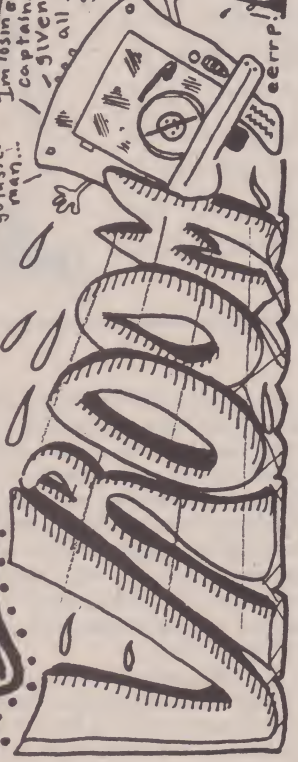


himself to the bartender as Ben Weasel. Being a Screeching Weasel fan, I looked up in a hurry. Now, I don't know Ben Weasel and I've never even seen him, but this dude was not Ben Weasel. I don't think Ben has tattoos covering both of his arms from wrist to shoulder. I also don't think Ben has OZZY tattooed on his fingers. I decide to play with him. I start talking with him about how much I like the *Boogada* and *Wiggle* CDs. I will admit he knew his Screeching Weasel, so he was a fan. As the rumor got around that Ben Weasel was in the club, people started to gather around. This guy was getting free beer and asked for his autograph. I couldn't believe people were falling for this.

The time came for Elbow Grease to play. I went to the stage and hung out doing my job. About four songs into the set I explained to the band about the Ben Weasel impersonator. I had an idea. I took the mike and asked for everyone's attention. I announced that Ben Weasel was here. Like it had been rehearsed, the joker stands on the bar and starts waving to the crowd. People applauded.

ADVENTURES of the Lil' Green Guys!

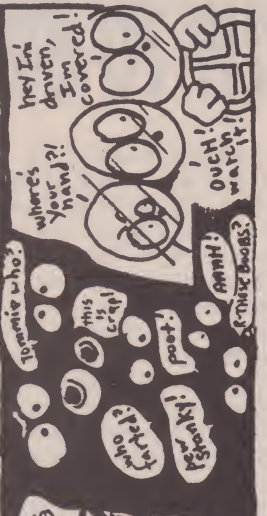
When we left our heroes, they were speeding frantically to their hard earned, ass kissing to get, Friday night CBGB's gig... facing perils of danger on interstate number 95. I'm losing a go faster man... I'm losing a captain... I've given er... all snes gawt!



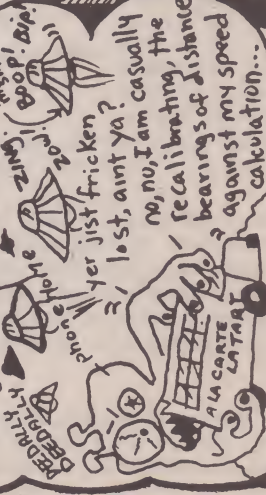
"The weather lashed out, in a frenzy treacherous, wipers paralyzed, unable to see, roads dark and slippery with many uninviting hiding curves of death."



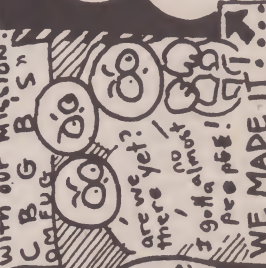
helpless fanz were crammed like cattle into the black abyss, waiting in the dark and exhaust laden chill to rock out at the famed CBGB's... all 6 crushed in the back of the funkilbus... While those Rock gods... Tommie Griggz talked of important things in the front.



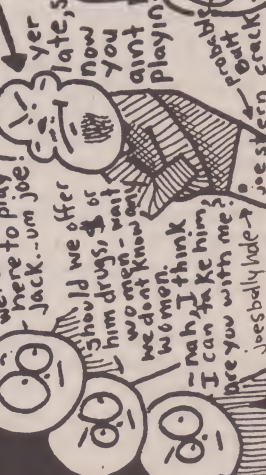
When suddenly we were abducted by icky aliens, and then taken against our will to their hometown of dirty Ohio. They poked us, prodded us, grabbed our asses. It looked GRM, & time was ticking down... fast.



But we were lucky... we hadn't showered for days! tell our story and prepare to bring in equipment, for the show of shows, the event of events, Palooza de la Yum!



even after the telling of our highly embellished yet quite refreshing story... We never did get to play, we were cornswaggled, misled young musos... in these... heads.



even after the telling of our highly embellished yet quite refreshing story... We never did get to play, we were cornswaggled, misled young musos... in these... heads.



MORAL: DON BE LAYTE. TO CBGBS... Finit

BY: Tommie Griggz 97 © Lil Green Bus, NON SYNDICATE CRAPOLA

I then invited "Ben" to come up and play "Ashtray" (off of *Boogada*) with the band. He yells "Most definitely. Right after I drain the dragon!" Yes, those were his exact words. He disappeared into the bathroom and I followed behind him. Sure enough, when I opened the door, "Ben" was trying to crawl out a small window. He couldn't fit. When he exited the bathroom, Elbow's lead singer Mike announced to the crowd what was going on. This guy had to walk out of that bar with people covering him with beer and spit. He wasn't happy. To this day I can't figure out why so many people knew Ben Weasel enough to want his autograph, but not enough to know it really wasn't Ben.

1988 - This happened a long time ago and I will never forget it. Six or seven local punk bands were playing at a VFW hall in Cambridge, Massachusetts. There were about 50 people in attendance. This was an all ages show and no alcohol was being served. Three of the bands played without a hitch. Every one was having a great time. Before the forth band went on, I saw a guy about 20 stagger into the hall. This guy was messed up on either drugs or alcohol. The next bands starts playing and they were unreal. I have no idea who they were, but they had the entire hall going crazy. Maybe five minutes into the set, the drunk guy starts a fight in front of the stage. The band stops playing and the lead singer stands in between the two combatants and says "Come on guys, I'm catching some bad vibes down here. Lets calm down." The singer stops and looks at the drunk. The drunk shakes his head and mumbles "Ya, ya, ya all right." Then he yells, "Here's a finger in your eye!" This jerk buried half of his index finger on hi right hand into the singer's eye socket. It happened so fast. It was absolutely the most painful looking thing I've ever seen happen to anyone. The singer fell to the ground screaming and I don't blame him. The rest of the band and about 10 kids jump on and started beating the drunk. A friend and I picked up the singer, threw him in my car, and drove him to the hospital. He ended up being all right. The finger went under the eyeball. The drunk was given a brutal beating. I haven't seen him since.

1992 - I was in South Carolina working for a few weeks and decided to go to a few punk shows. I was in a bar called something like Jumpers or Jumper Cables, I can't remember. I didn't know anybody so I was standing off to the side watching the slamming. In walks this guy who was about 6' 4", 250 lbs. This guy had more muscles than most small towns. He walks into the middle of the pit, sporting his cut off shirt and shorts, and stops. He reaches into his fanny pack (?) and pulls out a plastic spoon and a jar of Gerber's baby food. He stood in the middle of the pit, rocking his head back and forth, eating his baby food. After eating his second jar, he turned around and left. Technically, this guy might not be a nitwit, but he sure was a weird one.

1989 - Before I write this story, I must explain something. Before The Channel (Boston) closed down a few years ago, the bouncers that worked there were known for being maggots. They enjoyed grabbing people half their size and throwing them around like a rag doll. They often ruined good shows.

Danzig was playing on a hot summer night. The place was jammed and it was unbelievably hot. The crowd was having a good time and of course there were plenty of stage divers. The bouncers, being overly aggressive, tried their best to grab the divers and kick them out of the club. No big deal. One skinny kid gets on stage and leaps off. This huge bouncer grabbed the kid by his arm mid air. Some of the people in front of the stage grabbed the stage diver's feet. The result was a tug of war. Another bouncer joined in, ripping off the diver's shirt. The huge bouncer was pulling hard on the kid's wrist and before you knew it, the kid's arm suddenly became six inches longer. The kid started screaming. His shoulder or his arm became dislocated. The crowd immediately let go, but the bouncers proceeded to yank the kid around in obvious pain. I know bouncers have a job to do, but they don't have to tear off people's arm in the process.

1996 - Tree was playing at The Middle East in Cambridge, Ma. The crowd inside was a violent one. Lots of fights. After catching an errant boot to the groin, I decided to go outside for a while to shake (not literally) the effect. While sitting on the sidewalk, two groups of men came out and started arguing. One group was three or four Latinos, the other was six or seven white guys. No punches were being thrown, only pushing. I sat and watched as one of the Latino guys walked away towards a car and opened the trunk. I thought this guy was getting a gun. I was wrong. Instead he pulled out a two foot machete. He walked back to the group of arguing men. He stopped about ten feet from them, bent over, and started to scrap the machete back and forth against the concrete sidewalk. While he did this, sparks were flying all over the place. The whole time he was yelling in Spanish. Needless to say, when the white guys turned to this maniac with a sparking machete, they turned and walked away - intact.

1994 - Rollins Band in Providence, Rhode Island. When I walked into Lupo's, I thought I had just entered study hall. Seventy five percent of the people were writing away in note books. Obviously, these people were also fans of Henry Rollins the writer and spoken word artist. So am I in fact. I was standing up against a concrete wall. At my feet sat a young kid basically twiddling his fingers. From around the corner walks Rollins himself. He stops about five feet from me and the kid next to me. The kid suddenly reaches to his back pocket and pulls out a folded notebook and pen. He starts feverishly writing into the notebook. He was really going at it. Feeling a little nosy, I look to see what exactly he is writing. Get this, he was writing absolutely nothing. He didn't even have his pen cocked to write. Rollins walks away and the kid puts his notebook and pen away.

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GUEST EDITORIAL

MTV: THE EVIL EMPIRE?

by A.J. Notarides

IS MTV still the evil empire?

Recently switching channels between *Hill Street Blues* re-runs and the Cartoon Network, I saw a video for the *Queers* on MTV. My immediate reaction was to run to my room, burn all my *Queers* records and listen to the Dead Kennedys. Then I had an epiphany and thought to myself, isn't it better that MTV plays the *Queers* over their usual crap? I mean, wouldn't the world be a better place if kids bought records by the *Queers*, instead Bush or some other Nirvanawannabe band?

The complete and utter hatred for MTV has been part of the scene (punk, indie, underground, etc.) for a long time, but where did it come from? It came from years of MTV ignoring any music that was not on top of the charts and put out on a major label. Eventually, the reason for the hate became second to the hate itself. And any band on MTV was deemed a sellout regardless of what they sounded like. The punk scene's hatred for MTV was rather meaningless for many years because bands couldn't afford to make videos anyway, and even if they did make a video, MTV had no interest in playing it.

Then everything changed with the success of Nirvana. Fanzines like *Maximum Rock 'n' Roll*, who initially were congratulating Nirvana for their success, eventually stopped reviewing all major label records, and MTV began playing "alternative" videos in an effort to see what would stick. How else can one explain them playing a Tad video?

In both situations the music became secondary. In the case of MTV, music was still secondary to profits as it always has been. The only difference was now MTV was playing a wider variety of videos; not in an attempt to promote new music, but out of desperation to fill the void left by viewers turning off Bruce Springsteen, Motley Crue, and Prince. In the case of *Maximum Rock 'n' Roll*, the idea was that a band on a major didn't need *Maximum's* support, and the zine's resources would be better spent promoting independent music.

With MTV's playing videos by almost anyone in hopes of finding the next Nirvana, bands were given exposure to mass audiences. These mass audiences quickly became mass record sales, and major labels realized there was a market for "alternative" and began buying up bands who were more than willing to leave behind the

independents for greater exposure and profits.

Bands began to "sell out" to majors. Now the term "sell out" has many meanings, but here is the correct one: If a band alters its music not because they believe it will make the music better, but in hopes it will gain them a mass audience, it has sold out. An example of this would be the *Circle Jerks*. *Group Sex* and *Wild in the Streets* are classic albums that can hold their own against almost any record made in the last 20 years, but the band's major label debut was hideous. It sounded like bad speed metal (isn't bad speed metal redundant?) and flopped terribly. Other bands like *Jawbreaker* suffered the same fate. Is this MTV's fault? Of course not; it is the band's fault for not realizing that their audiences are capped.

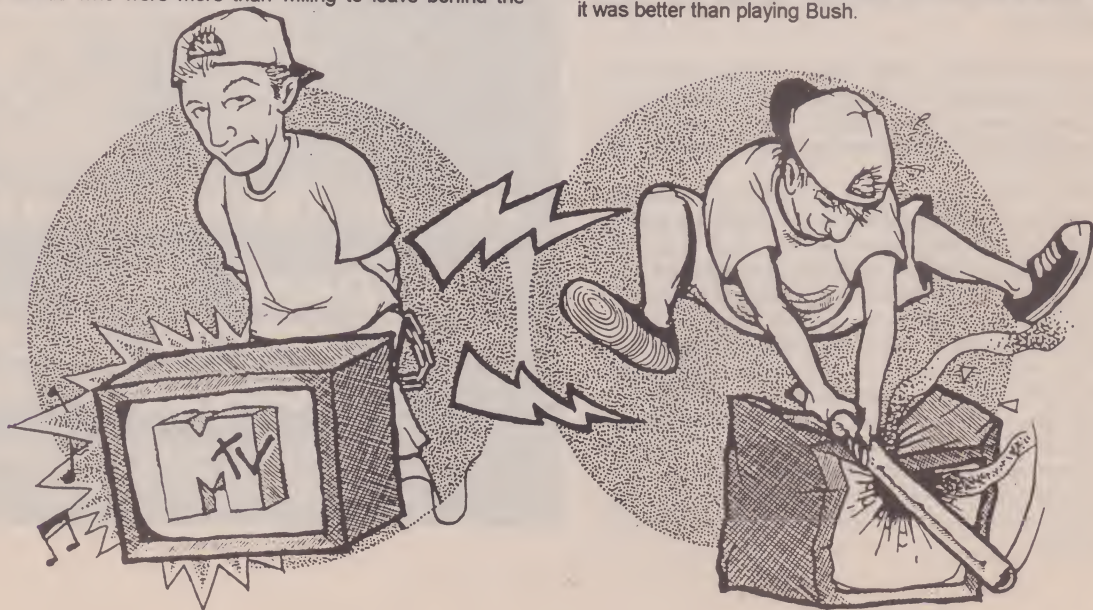
At the same time, Green Day and the Offspring managed to sell millions of records, not because of their music, but because they happened to have the right sound at the right time. Without video play on MTV, both bands would have suffered the same fate as the *Circle Jerks* and *Jawbreaker* because most people get their music from MTV instead of going out and finding it on their own.

MTV gives bands exposure to wider audiences than is possible through fanzines and touring. No matter how much bands tour, more people are watching MTV than will go see them live. Most people don't take chances with music. They have no interest in seeing or buying records from bands they never heard of. So, getting played on MTV is very important if a band wants to be seen by larger audience because more people are watching MTV than will see a band on tour.

Since MTV has stop ignoring independent music and is willing to play the *Queers* and other bands like the Mr. T Experience and the Descendents, is our hatred for MTV still warranted? Hell yes.

MTV is still the very epitome of corporate rock, and longs for the days when playing Michael Jackson and White Snake sufficed. The only reason MTV plays bands like the *Queers* is because their ratings are down and they are desperate for an audience. They still have no interest in music and just want to make money.

So, should I burn all my *Queers* records because they are on MTV? No. Hating a band because it is on MTV is as stupid as liking a band because it isn't. A band should be judged on its music. How it presents that music is up to them. Although I cringed when I heard the Mr. T Experience on an episode of *The Real World*, I still thought it was better than playing Bush.





BEN WEASEL'S VIDEO EYE

A COLUMN ABOUT TELEVISION



It was supposed to be a landmark moment in television history; the opening of a door heretofore locked, bolted, and practically cemented shut; a huge strike towards mainstream acceptance; a harsh blow to the provincialism of the religious right

It was supposed to be a landmark moment in television history; the opening of a door heretofore locked, bolted, and practically cemented shut; a huge strike towards mainstream acceptance; a harsh blow to the provincialism of the religious right. All this, and a damn good piece of comedy too, if the critics were to be believed. And yet, when Ellen DeGeneres' character Ellen Morgan came out of the closet on prime time TV, my reaction was... embarrassment.

I assumed that this watershed event would've been well-written. I thought it would be more than a cuddly, teddy bear piece of fluff stretched out over an hour to accommodate those celebrities whose cameos would be etched in the consciousness of mainstream America for a few weeks as proof that they indeed have gay friends. I figured it wouldn't suck.

That the notoriously
controlling DeGeneres would turn
her own sexuality into a money-
shot ratings ploy shows not only
cynicism, but also a shocking lack of
vision

Did no one find it offensive that the episode was written as if the lead character were fourteen years old? Did anyone else find it strange that a female - aged 35, as the writers reminded us - who hasn't dated a man since the show underwent the transformation from *These Friends Of Mine* to *Ellen*, and who wears her hair and her clothes suspiciously just like a lesbian - would be written as a sexual moron who is only now realizing that she's a carpet-muncher? (Or maybe it's not so strange. DeGeneres' girlfriend, actor Anne Heche, could be the inspiration for this nonsense. The thirty-something Heche announced just prior to the airing of the episode that she hadn't realized she was a dyke until she met Ellen. Statements like that make one long for the days when studios and agents saw it as their job to cover up incredibly stupid comments as well as deviant sexuality. If Heche is really that clueless, shouldn't her agent have a trained monkey by her side to squeeze her hand or

pee on her or something whenever she's about to divulge another piece of humiliating personal information to the press? What next - do we get an account of the time she walked around all day with a piece of toilet paper hanging out of the back of her pants???)

Oprah Winfrey - who is sorta the quieter, deformed cousin of that terrible trio of brassy, toothy, overacting New York mutts, Streisand, Midler, and Minelli - appears as a therapist who - surprise! - is a slightly lower-key version of her know-it-all, sympathy-sweating, black-when-I-wanna-be talk show persona. Oprah works so hard at being the kind of person you can really talk to that you can't help feeling like smashing her face in. Wearing a row of donut-like bracelets on each arm - as if to make her for her near-total lack of ethnicity - Ms. Winfrey gets Ellen to admit she digs chicks after learning Ellen has lied to friends about having sex with a man. In flashbacks, we see the events leading up to the hot and steamy supposed sex acts as told to her pals juxtaposed with the truth, as disclosed only to Oprah; in a comic flip of the old "he couldn't get it up" joke, Ellen is sitting fully clothed on the edge of the bed telling the poor dope it's not his fault.

So, the woman not only took 35 years to figure out she was gay, but remained a *virgin* the entire time. I almost screamed.

The writers couldn't pen a script in which Ellen *really* comes out of the closet (the episode that aired - despite being promoted as "Ellen comes out" - was really "Ellen discovers she's gay, walks around like a smack-shooting Mongoloid for 40 minutes, and then finally comes out at the very end of the show") because the audience who's been watching the show for however many seasons it's been running would feel ripped off. The golden rule of revealing secrets on the small screen is that the audience can never be the last to know; if we're discovering that Ellen's been "eating out" all these years at the same time as her friends, we feel stupid. Though sitcoms are condescending by nature, though they treat us like idiots, they're not supposed to be *mean* about it. And the writers certainly couldn't have her suddenly wake up from the embrace of a man to snap to her sexuality because she hasn't dated a man in three seasons - in fact, the entire subject of the character's sexual life has been an Area 51 ever since DeGeneres fired everybody and changed the title of the show.

The problem with this show is that it made an issue - a *Sweeps Week* issue at that - out of something that could have been dealt with more realistically over the course of an entire season.

Ellen's friends start out wondering aloud why she never dates men. They begin to put two and two together - the pants, the hair - and finally, Ellen is confronted. Keeping Ellen in character - instead of turning her into a confused and evidently retarded child as the writers did for the dyke episode - the script follows Ellen through her *characteristic* hemming and hawing, her adamant denials which inevitably crumble seconds after they're uttered, and finally, to the fateful moment when the awful truth is blurted out. Yes, Ellen's a dyke and her best response would be, "You're just not figuring it out?!!?" Instead, we get a cloying circle jerk with all the sexual heat of a white sale and the wit and insight of a *Gilligan's Island* reunion.

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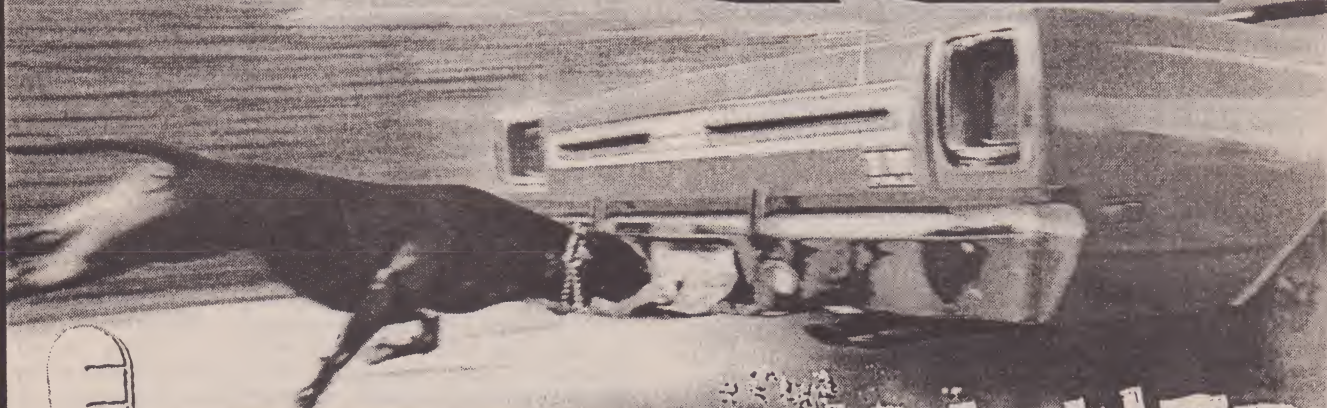
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The follow-up week was even more offensive, featuring a guest appearance by dowdy dyke Chastity Bono, who's running a support group which Ellen has attempted to attend with her parents. Problem is, mom and dad (dad in particular) have totally fucking freaked on Ellen for coming out. The fact that the small-minded bigotry, screaming, yelling, huffing and puffing is all in direct contrast to everything we've ever been shown about the characters of Ellen's parents doesn't matter. When Ellen's dimwitted pop makes a last minute appearance at the support group meeting to shout, "She's here, she's queer, get used to it!", we know that the storm has passed, that dad's back to being a lovable bumbler without a mean bone in his body, and that everything's gonna be A-OK. And by the way, Ellen still hadn't gotten laid by season's end.

That the notoriously controlling DeGeneres would turn her own sexuality into a money-shot ratings play shows not only cynicism, but also a shocking lack of vision; had she built up the tension when she started blabbing about this back in September while she was couch-hopping from Leno to Letterman, she'd probably have a better than even chance of lasting another two years on the air. As it now stands, she's got her big payoff, but will anybody stay tuned to a show that's ultimately written for nitwits, lesbians, and now, boys who are just discovering the wonders of their own penises? Let's face it - *Xena: Warrior Princess* already does a better job of capturing those demographics. And it's funnier.

ABC, figuring that they've cornered the market on Must-See TV run-off, has shoved Drew Carey in our faces so relentlessly that it would be surprising if the show *weren't* a minor hit. But one has to wonder whether it was money or sexual favors that were handed out to those critics who heaped so much praise on *The Drew Carey Show*. Or perhaps it's the fact that Carey himself is a semi-likable everyman - a hip-to-be-square, brain-in-an-oaf's-body

native of Cleveland who likes his pizza and beer and never mind the 1962 buzzcut and Henry Kissinger specs. Problem is, the characters who surround him range from excruciatingly dull to mind-numbingly boorish. The two buddies who live and work together are carbon copies of each other, so why bother casting two actors? Either it's a sign of a subtle homosexual undercurrent or it's

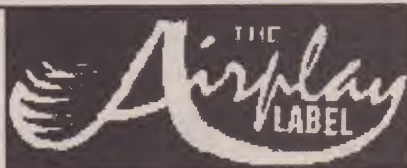
Drew's attempt to copy the *Seinfeld* formula - two goofy guy pals plus one wacky chick who's a platonic friend and can hoist a beer just like one of the boys. Like *Seinfeld*, the characters are totally one-dimensional. Unlike *Seinfeld*, the actors playing them aren't particularly interesting. The fact that they're given nothing remotely funny to say doesn't help.

How a show this poorly written can survive in the 1990's is truly beyond me. The banal plotlines follow every formula from *The Honeymooners* to *The Facts Of Life*, the one-liners are about as clever and fresh now as they were when actors like Jimmie "J.J." Walker and the guy who played Squiggy were first uttering them, and this supposedly hip show actually attempts to give us a little morality lesson every third episode or so.

Most nauseating of all is the character of Mimi, a female version of *Seinfeld*'s Newman. Difference is, Mimi is a regular on the show so we're forced to put her with her obnoxiousness on an all-too-frequent basis. Is a 400-pound woman sporting Divine eyeshadow who dresses like one of Marcia Brady's tubby high-school friends really inherently funny? What is our reaction supposed to be when this hideous troll is lowered to making fat jokes about the relatively slim Carey? If fingernails on a blackboard appeal to you, I suggest you stock up on videotape and record the summer reruns of this odious little offering.

On the good side, NBC has come up with a couple of decent shows.

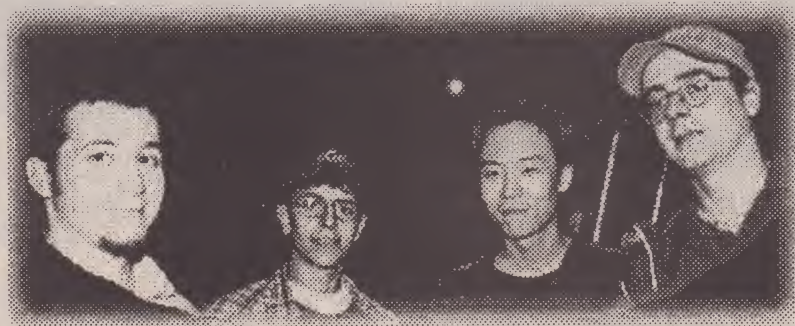
I absolutely refused to give 3rd *Rock From The Sun* a show when it debuted. Space aliens in human bodies on Earth? Sorry, I was never a big fan of Mork and was *My Favorite Martian* ever anything but sleep-inducing? But as time went on, I found myself drawn to this show which is, dare I say, *witty*. I don't mean to imply it's perfect; all too often, the writers pad episodes with bad slapstick, dumb clichés, or - when they run out of ideas - near rip-offs of lesser sitcoms. It annoyed the hell out of me with its cameos by the likes of Mike Ditka and Dennis Rodman during the sweeps weeks (which are the television equivalent of frat house Hell Weeks - you know the actors and writers are just gritting their teeth and forcing their way through it - to say nothing for the viewer who's



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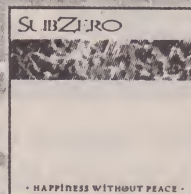


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finale was not only totally pointless, the damn 3-D glasses didn't even work (although this may have more to do with my local NBC affiliate's terrible broadcast signal than anything else.)

Still, conceptually this is (gulp) a good idea, if not a totally fresh one: Armed with a mission to observe our society, aliens are placed in human bodies and plopped down on Mother Earth (Ohio, to be exact, where their leader, played by John Lithgow, immediately moves the family into an attic apartment [which they regard as something akin to Xanadu. Or maybe Graceland] and gets a gig as a physics professor at a small college.) Forget Mork, and think of the possibilities. The writers of *3rd Rock* did and they've come up with something pretty great. The characters are constantly learning about some new and bizarre aspect of American culture and the fact that it provides for above-average observational comedy is only one of its treats, the other being the opportunity to watch its talented cast, led by the utterly superb John Lithgow, at work. Lithgow sets the tone; the aliens are never in on the joke. They remain stone-faced, genuinely intrigued by this strange new world. Which is not to say the characters are humorless; Lithgow, who has suffered through so many poor roles in the past ten years, finally gets the chance to really show off his comedic abilities, and he's nothing short of outstanding. His timing is superb, his physical gifts remarkable, and his delivery sublime. The remaining supporting characters are adequate, though special mention goes to French Stewart, the squinty-eyed, whiny-voiced "brother" of Lithgow's character. Stewart's character would be an annoying clone of the Urkel variety if it weren't for the restraint shown by the actor, who truly understands the meaning of the term "ensemble cast."

Kristen Johnston is fair as Sally, the sister of the Lithgow character. She has a tendency to overact, which can grate, but she's certainly not a scene-stopping distraction. Joseph Gordon-Levitt, as Lithgow's son, does a fine job with the material he's given, but the writers have made a crucial error with the character; they seem to have forgotten that he's supposed to be the oldest member of the alien crew - a *really* old man - trapped in an adolescent's body. Because of this apparent amnesia, rather than acting accordingly, Gordon-Levitt is forced to act like a teenager with above-average common sense and intellect.

Jane Curtin shows a comedic flair not seen since her days on *Saturday Night Live* as Mary Albright, Lithgow's fellow professor and love interest, who has no idea he's an alien (though she's certainly aware that he's strange; the writers are clever enough to justify her attraction to such a weirdo by occasionally throwing in a reference or two to the fact that despite appearances, she's kind of an oddball herself. But the key is subtlety...) She's certainly come a long way since *Kate & Allie*.

3rd Rock From The Sun is a fine show. Not perfect, maybe not even quite great, but damn close, and that ain't bad for TV. And by the way, ABC originally owned it. They dropped it, evidently to make room for such brilliance as *The Drew Carey Show*.


And finally, take *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, update it for the 90's, set it in a radio station, and have Mary and Lou switch places, and you've essentially got *Newsradio*. Only *Newsradio* is not some dipshit rip-off. It's simply the best sitcom on TV, due in no small part to the fine work of actors Dave Foley (from *Kids In The Hall*, where, ironically, I always found him to be mildly irritating) and Phil Hartman (who takes the Ted Baxter character to new heights) as well as every other member of the cast.

Almost all the action takes place inside the station (sorta like WKRP, only the set has been built to resemble the left-to-right setup of *MTM*, though *Newsradio* has its entrance at stage left and the boss' office at stage right,) which is what you want out of a comedy like this (and which is why, for instance, *Cheers* - a show whose action seldom moved out of the bar - worked so well, at least until that awful Kirstie Alley showed up.) Every cast member is crucial to the

show's quick-paced, *Seinfeld*-inspired evolutionary humor (and though I hate using the "S" word, I do it only because the shows have in common a brilliant knack for typing up the silly little comedic asides at the end of each show when they'd just as well stand on their own. I call this "evolutionary humor" because it's the first term that popped into my head. The real point is, I appreciate the effort... and it probably has something to do with the involvement of former *Seinfeld* director Tom Cherones) and damn if every single cast member isn't quick, funny, and almost perfectly defined. The weak links are the character of Dave's girlfriend, who's so unfortunately reduced to whining in so many episodes, and who has the irritating habit of occasionally substituting squinting for acting (as if she's studied with Michael Madsen,) and the character of Matthew, played by Andy Dick, who is veering dangerously close to Urkel territory with his geeky office-freak shtick. When the show debuted, Matthew was a bit slow and a little odd. Now he's a goddamned goofy-but-lovable, gullible-to-the-point-of-total-idioty, clumsy, ditsy lunatic and if they don't watch out, the other actors will find themselves victims of the Fonzie Syndrome. As is usually the case with eccentric sitcom characters, Matthew is a heck of a lot funnier when Dick rides the brakes a bit.

Unfortunately, the show has been the victim of terrible time slots and minimal network support. That will all supposedly change next season, when *Newsradio* will be given a stable time slot. I certainly hope so. The suits at NBC would do well to remember that *Seinfeld* took several seasons to catch on. *Newsradio* is capable of being just as popular. If you haven't seen it, check it out during summer reruns. Seldom will you catch a weak episode (though the season finale featuring a "what if?" premise set in space was a complete abortion) and even the lamer jokes put trash like *Suddenly Susan* and *The Naked Truth* to shame. • Watch and laugh.

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d. michael mcnamara

in the tradition of random thoughts

I was sitting at a Denny's in Seattle when, out of the blue, I realized that the new millennium is less than a thousand days away. This is perhaps making way too much out of the regular and ordinary constant of the passing of time, but it rather struck me as some sort of epiphany, and immediately summoned the recollection of being interviewed by Kristen and Tamar (who filmed and are currently editing a documentary of the events) at this year's WE Festival; after all, they asked me where I saw the festival heading in the future. My response? I paralleled the festival to a young writer's first attempt at a zine: Even if it's good to begin with, through trial and error it just gets better.

And WE Fest '96 was definitely good, with WE Fest '97 even better, proving the benefits of a little maturation and wisdom. What errors occurred last year were corrected, and this year's festival had a new and improved schedule which allowed the participants to attend every event. But don't think the festival got soft since last year: There was still enough action that attempting to attend everything was a simple and sure-proof prescription for exhaustion.

One error I made in the analogy, however, was that I didn't account for the vigor and ingenuity of the festival. That is, many zines improve by trimming the fat and disposing of failed ideas, and call it a day at that. One of the great qualities of the WE Festival is that the organizers continue their expansion and aren't afraid to take chances in doing so.

Which, of course, were the main cause of some this year's flaws: the bowling alley incident is a perfect example of this (all you need to know is that it never happened; enough said). However, something magical happens at the WE Fest every year which turns even the mediocre into a good time. Case scenario? This year saw an Indie Olympics introduced but, unfortunately, nothing much really came of it. Nothing, that is, until six mannequin heads were found in a dumpster and a crowd gathered in a parking lot to have spontaneous baseball, bowling, and skee shooting competitions with the unlikely objects.

Which alludes to what is rather likely the festival's greatest value: The people that attend it. One could write entire articles on just the free micro-brewed beer, the independent films, the many zines, or the bands, which are all great assets to the festival; but, in a way, so great that it might be redundant to write about them. For example, the selection process for the bands (referred to as "the gauntlet") was so strict and difficult that one could stage a successful festival with only the bands that were turned down.

The magical character of the festival's collective personality, though, is probably rooted in the involvement and passion of the attendees. Not only was everyone a huge fan of music, films, and zines (and, again, very often beer too), but in many cases they were into all of it enough to be a musician, writer, editor, publisher, or director themselves. (Heck, some were even involved enough to be alcoholics.) So you take a selection of

people who genuinely care about the festival – people committed to it enough to drive from New Jersey, New York, or Texas, like many of us did, or to ride in a boxcar from California, as did Matt and Lots – and mix it with friendliness and hospitality that is unmatched, and the solution is perhaps the single best word to describe the festival: community. As Jim Testa said, if there was one place on earth that I'd want to be stuck without a place to stay, it would be Wilmington, North Carolina during the WE Festival.

The communal feeling cannot be overemphasized, however: It easily transcends courtesy and politeness, and even surpasses benevolence. People were always helping others on some level, whether it was helping bands carry equipment, or donating food, money, beer, or smokes to Matt and Lots, or writing personalized postcard thank you notes (as Jim did,) or contributing to the collective effort by chipping in for beer the night we ran dry (which, by the way, obtained over \$150). Kenyata (one of the five ringleaders of the event) called it Indie Rock Boot Camp;

I think of [the WE Festival] as the best damn excuse one could have to go a week without proper sleep or nutrition

Tamar compared spending four days at the festival with someone to being like four years of college; Jim said that you can leave any festival with press releases and demos, but you leave the WE Festival with friends. All of these are accurate, which leads me to think of it as the best damn excuse one could have to go a week without proper sleep or nutrition.

Because one doesn't go to the WE Festival and just see great bands, great movies, and get a lot of free stuff; one makes the trek to North Carolina to establish relationships. After all, it was at the initial festival that I first met Lee Buffaloe (another of the five ringleaders), who provided Jim & I with greatly appreciated hospitality (read: a place to sleep), as well as when I first met Jim and countless others. Many months later, Jim kindly invited me to Jersey Beat's Fifteenth Anniversary Show, and who was scheduled to perform that night? Aviso 'Hara, Inkpot Monkey, Kid With Man Head, and Tommie Griggz: All WE Fest graduates. Point made.

And so, with the attendance of such devoutly committed participants and observers mixed with the uncompromising insistence that the festival remains completely independent and free of corporate sponsorship at any level (even bands signed to independent labels aren't allowed to perform if their label receives corporate distribution), the WE Fest will enter the coming millennium as the greatest festival *Rolling Stone* was never invited to.

No Sleep 'Til Thursday!



SECOND ANNUAL WE FEST

by Jim Testa

The 2nd Annual Wilmington Exchange Festival, Wilmington, NC - May 22-28

Somewhere around the third or fourth day of this year's Wilmington Exchange (WE) Festival in Wilmington, North Carolina, someone shoved a video camera in my face and asked me what the definition of "WE Fest" would be if it were listed in the dictionary. This is what I blurted out:

WE Fest: "A chaotic, alcoholic, sleepless convergence of like-minded individuals dedicated to the DIY ideal."

I probably should have added something about 'over-achieving' and threw in the word 'unique.' There are other indie rock festivals out there, but none that I know of that run an entire week, or throw in a fanzine expo and independent film festival. And while it's not unusual for raves to begin in the wee hours and run until dawn, when was the last time you heard of a rock festival that included after-hours, all-night gigs as part of its regular schedule - for seven straight days and nights???



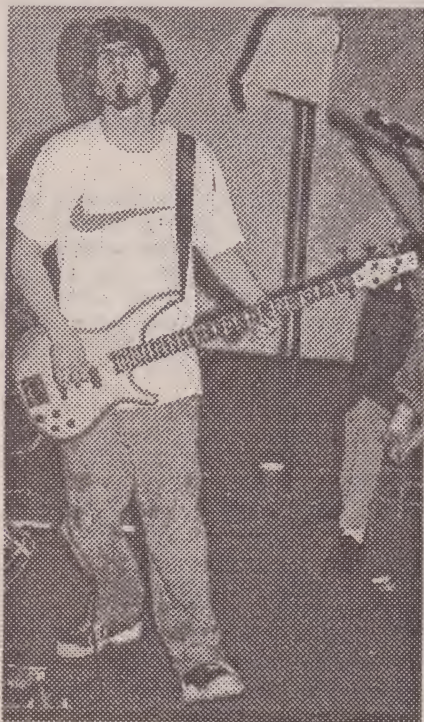
I'm a WE fester and I Kick Ass!

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Photos by Jim Testa. Top, Crappy The Clown of the Punchdrunk Monkeys. Bottom, Alan Baez, Ricanstruction

And the thing is, I could list every band that played WE Fest, every independent film that was shown, every fanzine that participated, and I'd still be leaving out the most important part of this freewheeling monstrosity - the exhilarating experience of sharing this craziness with other people who love music and the Do It Yourself ethic as much as you do. Someone calculated that sharing four days at WE Fest was like rooming together for four years at college; whether that's true or not, it's no exaggeration to say that people arrive at WE Fest as strangers and leave as friends. It's about as intense a bonding experience as you can imagine; Kenyata Sullivan, one of the five founders and organizers of the festival, calls it "indie rock boot camp."

The few, the proud, the WE Festers. It becomes a part of you. The WE Fest experience doesn't end when the festival's over. Many of the bands who played last year's inaugural WE Fest stayed in touch, traded gigs, and came back again this year. That's what this thing is really all about.



WE Fest doesn't have any corporate sponsors; there are no banners over the stage trumpeting products or labels, no free giveaways from sneaker companies or CD manufacturers. Bands with a major label deal, major label publishing, or even indie label bands with major label distribution can not participate. The only commercial intrusion comes from the independent breweries who donate the bottomless kegs of microbrew beer that keep WE Festers afloat in a continuous alcoholic stupor.

The heart of the WE Festival is the Exchange; this is where you can find tables covered with free zines, flyers, stickers, catalogs and demo tapes, and where people meet to mingle & talk. This year, the Exchange was held in a deconsecrated church building in the heart of Wilmington's small but bustling downtown. (An extra big hug to Nadya and Erica for unselfishly manning the door and keeping the Exchange open, and working the door at most of the shows as well.)

This year, the Exchange doubled as late-night headquarters; after bands played from 7 p.m. to closing at different clubs around town, everyone would return to the Exchange and the basement turned into a makeshift rock club, usually with a couple of kegs of microbrew and more live music until dawn.

Even though I kept my personal beer consumption to a minimum, the lack of sleep caught up with me... I arrived on Thursday for the first night of the Fest, and by Friday night, I had stopped taking notes. Most of the week is a blur, especially the late-night gigs. Of course, there are a few memories that do stick out. Like Matt and Lots, the two unwashed, squatter punks who rode freightcars all the way from San Diego to get to Wilmington, and who seemed to be everywhere all seven days. Everyone was a little scared of them at first

- they seemed as feral as two junkyard dogs - but by the fourth day, everyone had fallen in love with Matt's dog, Matt himself was playing foosball with the guys, and everyone was chipping in to buy them smokes and beers. Then there was Emily, the local zine editor, who kept running around trying to get all the guys and gals to pose in the buff for a nudie calendar she was putting together. One volunteer got a little too enthusiastic and posed naked on top of a police car; then the cop came back and the poor sucker got thrown in jail for indecent exposure!

Every day seemed to bring some new crisis, but that somehow we'd muddle through it. For instance, the Fest had scheduled a Saturday afternoon hardcore matinee at a bowling alley - that seemed like a great idea, except that the bowling alley decided to back out at the last minute. But the show was moved to

Photos this page: Top, when the going gets weird, the weird go to WE Fest

Left: Dave Jr., Flickr

Rick D'Anjolell's store (also called The Exchange, which caused no end of confusion,) which has a little back room just perfect for punk shows, and everything turned out fine. That was pretty much the way it went the whole week: Schedule, crisis, resolution, more beer, no sleep, and big smiles all around.

Personal shoutouts to a few special people: Lee Buffaloe, one of the WE Fest organizers, for his hospitality and infectious good spirits; Tamar and Kristin, the two BU students who ran around videotaping everything for a documentary, whose energy & enthusiasm rubbed off on everyone around them; the Gang Of 5 (Kenyata, Lee, Nadya, Rick, and Alex) for putting the whole thing together; and all the Wilmingtonites who made me feel like I'd found my second home.

THE BANDS

Thursday, May 22:

Bessie's, a basement rock club that looks like most college rathskellers, played host tonight. **3 Cornered Season** from New York was a youngish quartet who played airy, almost ambient soundscapes, ruined by the lead singer's atonal, monotone vocals. They'd be better off as an instrumental unit. Greensboro, NC's **Breed 13** stepped in to fill a vacant slot (Scout, also from NYC, didn't show up) with their blend of sonic guitar and melodic vocals. **Ricanstruction**, also from New York City, blew the crowd away with a hypnotic mix of salsa rhythms, molten guitar, and angry political lyrics. From the sublime to the ridiculous, Illinois' **Deaden** cleared the room except for about 20 diehard headbangers who moshed their brains out to the band's full-on deathmetal attack, complete with authentic Satanic screams.

Friday, May 23:

The action moved to The Junkyard, actually a sandwich shop and adjacent bar that hosts bands. But the casual atmosphere was perfect. **The Revelers** - a New York-via-Cleveland quartet who everybody said looked just like the band in "That Thing You Do" - proved to be the biggest hit of WE Festival, with a knockout set of thrashing power-pop garage-rock that culminated in a magnificent encore of Cheap Trick's "Surrender." Maryland's **Absolutely Boxspring** had a bit of a Sixties flavor too, although more outwardly psychedelic. Not bad, but not half as much fun as Syracuse's **Mil Mulliganos** (formerly The Mulligans,) whose punchy pop-punk attack had the crowd bobbing their heads and bouncing up and down. Friday's late-night featured Rick D's new band, **6 Sigma**, whose extended free-form jams and electronic keyboards provided a nice respite from all the chugging guitar rock. And Providence, RI's **Flicker** capped the night with a gonzo set of demented power-trio metal that was both funny and rocking - one of the few bands I can think of who were probably better at 4:45 a.m. than they would have been earlier.

Saturday, May 24:

The punk-rock bowling didn't happen but the punk-rock show went just fine, relocated to the backroom of Rick D's store. North Carolina's **Jostle** provided a solid hardcore punch, although the band seemed infinitely better when the wild-haired bassist dropped



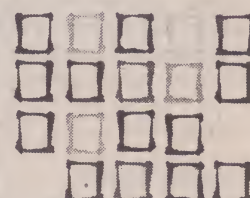
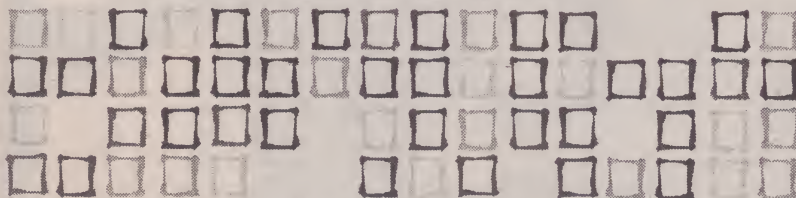
his instrument and just concentrated on vocals. **Unclench**, four guys in their late teens and early twenties from South Jersey, were lots of fun too, solid Old School hardcore mosh guitar and frothing vocals.

The main event on Saturday night moved to Jake's Downtown, one of Wilmington's largest nightspots (about the size of NYC's Irving Plaza.) The large stage proved ample to hold **Pineal Ventana**, a septet whose atmospheric industrial/goth experimentation intrigued a good portion of the crowd, although I thought that for all the sturm und drang, the results should have been a bit more interesting. Wilmington got a taste of NYC-style shake-it rock next with **Jenifer Convertible** raging through a great set of catchy, Huskerish guitar chug. And move over GWAR, here comes upstate NY's **Punch-drunk Monkeys** featuring Crappy The Clown, a wildly theatrical act with a foul-mouth circus clown in full regalia playing (kinda like GWAR) thudding heavy metal while coping with an amusing assortment of oversized stage props (including an exploding outhouse, an electric chair, and a 20-foot monster made of inflated garbage bags!)

The late-night was a little different tonight; Jake's cleared the house, and then opened up again as the afterhours "Paraphiliac's Ball," also known as Fetish Night. This turned out to be a collection of the local weirdos - grotesques in full leather gear with whips and chains - who performed a little light s&m on one another while several truly awful electronic bands played on stage. But there was free microbrew, so everybody got blasted and things started to get interesting around 3 a.m., when some of the WE Festers got curious and decided to sample the whips and hot-waxings.

Sunday was Movie Day, with an all-day independent film festival at The Starlight Club. I would have taken advantage of the club's overstuffed leather sofas and grabbed a nap, but due to a manpower shortage, I wound up "running" the festival (which meant changing

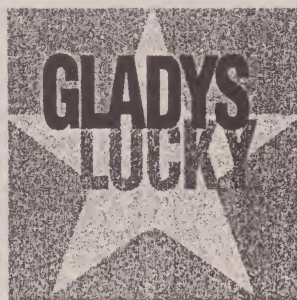
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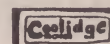
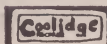
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the videotapes in the VCR.) Highlights included Onur Turkel's "House Of Pancakes," a funny slice of slacker life about a date gone horribly wrong, and Ethan Minsker's "Anything Boys Can Do," a documentary about women in rock focusing on the Lower East side band scene.

That evening's afterhours show back at The Exchange started with New Brunswick's **Suran Song In Stag**, whose tricky multi-media presentation (slides projected on band members and adjacent walls) went off flawlessly and seemed to really impress the late-nighters. **The Sidedoor Johnnys**, who actually made their debut at last year's WE Fest, followed with a triumphant set of their sassy and frenetic pop.

Memorial Day, Monday May 26:

The showcases moved to The Wavehog, a local bar that usually hosts cover bands, for - ironically - one of the most original nights of music of the festival. Locals **Three Bean Soup** started the evening with a laidback set of jazzy originals, featuring guitar, trumpet, and drums. New Brunswick's **Bionic Rhoda** seemed to be having sound problems throughout their set, but the crowd still seemed to appreciate their strummy electric college-rock. The award for the youngest band at WE Fest goes to Jacksonville, FL's **Belik**, a trio of two 16-year olds and a 15-year old who played thrashy progressive rock. It was weird enough seeing a lineup of vocals, guitar, and drums (the singer did pick up a bass for a few songs,) but what floored everyone was the talent of the guitar player. Sixteen years old (and a ringer for the young Matt Dillon to boot,) and the kid was throwing down leads that would have made Eddie Van Halen blush. Then, for the last number, he switched places with the drummer and turned out to be just as talented behind the skins! (I almost asked for the kid's autograph; if he's doing this at 16, it's scary to think of where he'll be at 20.) **Boss Jim Gettys** - yes, another Jersey band - followed with a killer set of gutbucket rock n roll that featured a hilarious Classic Rock medley. I was far less impressed by

Spooge, a Zappa-ish noise-rock combo who played way too long and weren't nearly as funny as they were supposed to be. Local bluescore cats **Rural Swine** finished up the evening - and packed the house - with a raucous set that suggested the Jesus Lizard gone rockabilly.

Tuesday, May 27:

Tonight's action was at a small danceclub called The Axis, so the bands played on what would normally be the dance floor surrounded by barbed wire and disco lights. Cool. Oh no, not more free microbrew! Yes, they had free beer here too. Locals **Bananalogue** (normally known as Analogue) kicked things off with a set of ambient instrumentals that barely dented the background din. **Bicentennial Quarters** fared a little better with an extended set of spazzy originals, like an artier version of the Chapel Hill Superchunk/Archers Of Loaf sound. That set the stage for New Brunswick's **Aviso' Hara**, who roared through a killer set of their sonic-death guitar spew topped by Ralph Nicasastro's sweetly melodic vocals. As a topper, they threw in a cover of AC/DC's "Dirty Deeds" that they had learned in the parking lot that afternoon. Killer. More rockabilly ended the night with **Dead Blue Cat & The Ill Billy Boys**. Yee-haw.

Wednesday, May 28:

Last night. After a week of great bands, you'd think there wouldn't be anything left in the tank... but Syracuse's **Flashing Astonishers** managed to crank up the crowd with an energetic set of slashing power-chord rock with garagey muscle. And they were followed by another impressive band - **Lazycain**, from Richmond, VA, whose spastic quirk-pop recalled early Dismemberment Plan.

There were a LOT more bands that I haven't mentioned, but the old synapses fused somewhere around 4 a.m. Friday morning and most of WE Fest is little more than a blur. Next year, I'll have to take more notes... But don't worry, I will be back. And if you have any sense, you'll be there too.

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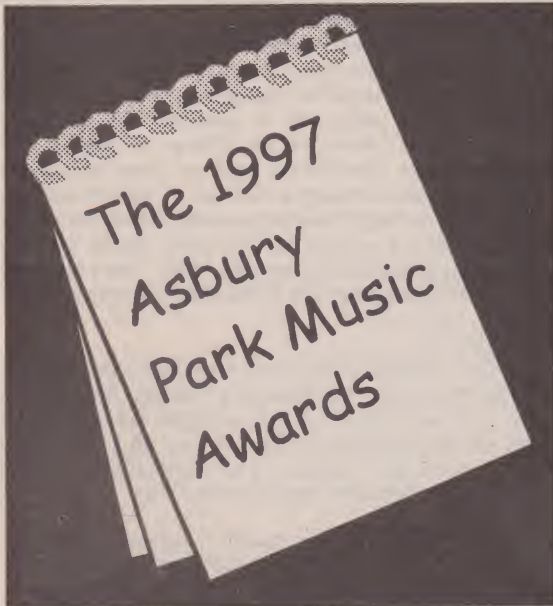
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Making A Scene



The Fifth Annual Asbury Park Music Awards - June 18, 1997

I keep waiting for the episode of *Sliders* in which Quinn and his friends slide to an alternate universe where local bands are treated with admiration and respect; where instead of groveling for the chance to play dingy bars in front of a handful of uncaring slobs for no money, unsigned musicians are treated as a valued part of the community.

Well, for one night a year in South Jersey, that unlikely scenario actually comes true. The Asbury Park Music Awards - the creation of Scott Stamper and Peter Mantas of The Saint - may not be as gaudy or celebrated as the Academy Awards, but at least it's an occasion when local bands are treated not only with respect, but as celebrities (small-scale celebrities, perhaps, but celebrities nonetheless,) and nominated for awards that recognize their contributions to the local music scene.

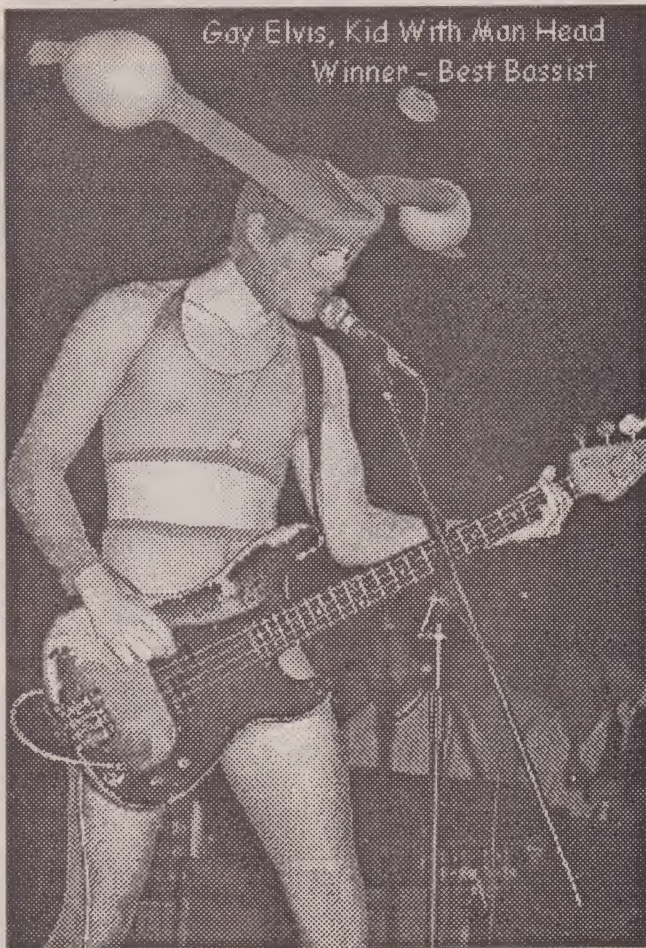
The Fifth Annual Awards this year, held June 18, moved to the Fastlane in Asbury Park. The club's recent renovation has turned it into a glitzy nightclub; the old bleachers are gone, replaced by chi-chi decorations, a good-sized stage, a sizable dancefloor, and an even larger bar area. If the owners decide to host live music there again (that seems to be up in the air at the moment,) it will be a terrific place to see bands.

Al Muzer of the Aquarian, Michele Amabile of WHTG FM, and local character Dave Mains (in drag again this year, in a very attractive silver lame' evening dress) hosted the event. Local "celebrities" - merchants, musicians, bartenders, and even yours truly - took turns reading off the nominees and announcing the winners of the awards, little gold-plated statuettes of a old-fashioned microphone which Mars Needs Women's Shawn McCabe dubbed "The Golden Penis."

Winners included McCabe as Top Male Vocalist, Matt Butcher (aka "Gay Elvis") of Kid With Man Head as Top Bassist, WHTG-FM as "Best Radio Station To Support Live Music," Love In Reverse for "Best Live Performance," and Michele Amabile for "Top Journalist To Support Live Music" (for her work at Smut and The Aquarian.) Mothermania walked away with Top Young Band for the second year in a row.

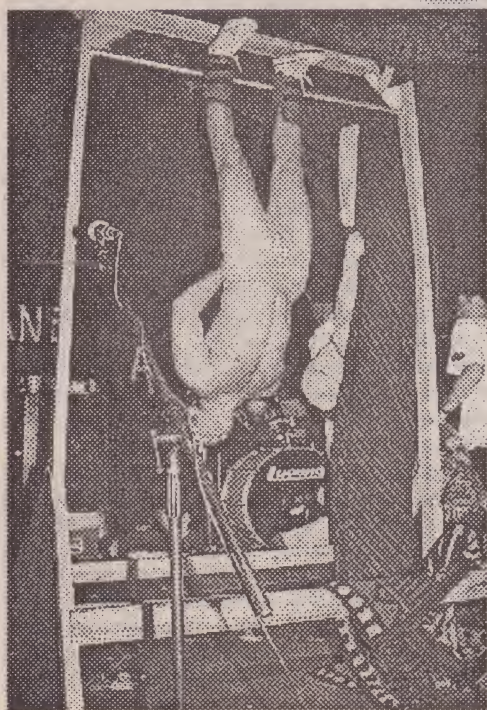
Matt Pinfield was given a special award as a "Living Legend" of the Jersey shore scene, but apparently the former deejay turned MTV host was too busy being legendary to honor his commitment to attend (or call to apologize for his absence.)

In between the awards and awkwardly-read plugs for the evening's sponsors, local bands got a chance to perform a few songs for the large and - for most of the evening - enthusiastic audience. Among the more notable were Ropetree, a 3-piece grunge rock combo, longtime scene veterans Outcry, the metalloid Lemmings, and the fizzy power-pop of Evelyn Forever. The all-but-uncategorizable Mars Needs Women (are they Pop? Metal? Glam? Punk? Or just Cheap Trick





Top - Co-hostess Michele Amabile, winner of Best Music Journalist; right, Ocean Stem, Personality Plus; bottom, Mike from Kid With Man Head previews his new workout video



Asbury Park Music Awards

reborn?) - who have been touring virtually non stop for the past year - showed enormous improvement with their brief set, blazing through a short, high-powered set of originals brimming with attitude, followed by a killer cover of Cheap Trick's "Auf Wiedersehen."

Sets by Stone Groove, Deviants Of Reality, and Brown showcased one of South Jersey's most overlooked scenes, the wealth of talented and multi-ethnic groove bands doing hip hop/jazz/rock fusion. Running the three bands together may have been a mistake though, since it turned a big chunk of the evening into a funkfest and took away from the variety of sounds on display.

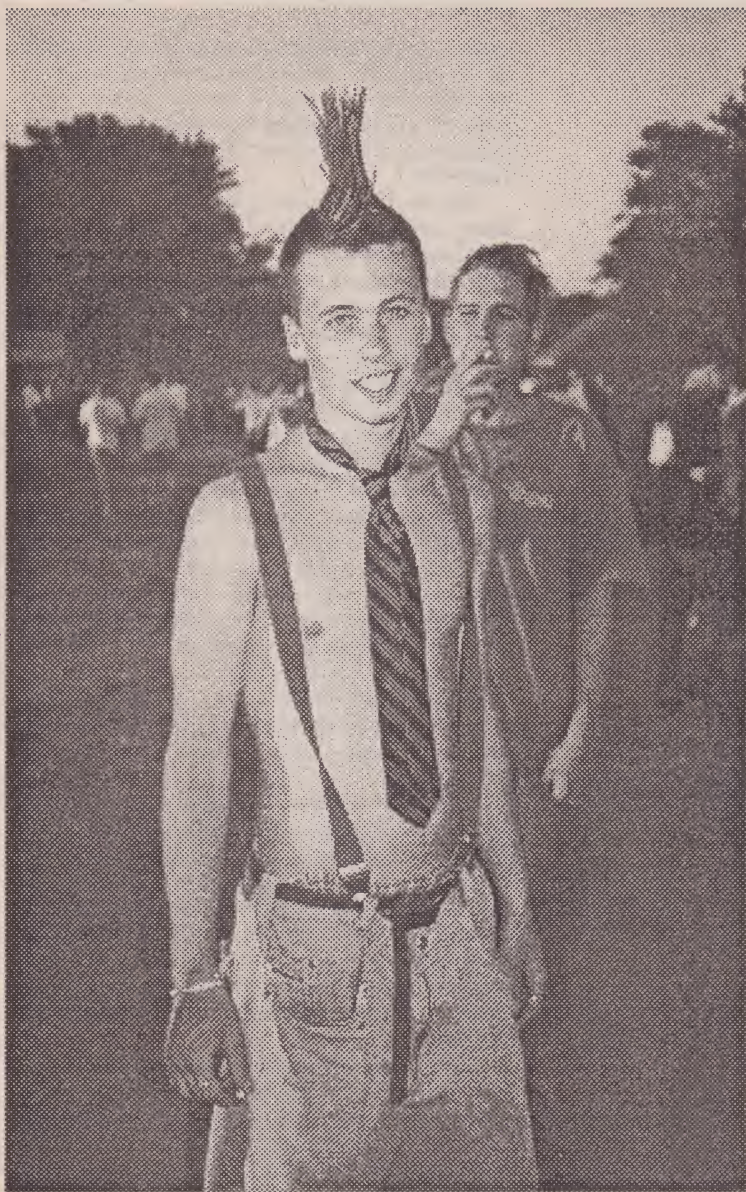
The highlight of last year's Awards was Kid With Man Head's set, when the pop-punk powerhouse quartet dressed up in women's bathing suits. How were they going to top that? Well, they did - by erecting a giant wooden trellis and suspending nearly-naked lead singer Mike Pimco upside-down in a pair of gravity boots, with the other members dressed up in sheer nylon body stockings. As soon as they started, the club - which had seemed to be emptying out - filled up again, as the crowd whooped, screamed, and moshed through KWMH's set. Everything after that - including a too-long set by the unimpressive soul group Fossil Cain - couldn't help but be anti-climactic.

A couple of quibbles: Last year's show, held at the Saint, seemed to run a little more smoothly and much more punctually; this year, there was a hint of chaos to the proceedings and everything ran late. Which brings my second complaint: Why a weeknight? Headliners Kid With Man Head didn't go on until after 1 a.m., and that's pretty late for a Wednesday night when some schools were still in session and older folks had to get up for work the next day.

Then there's the matter of defining the Asbury Park scene: New Brunswick-based Mars Need Women and Evelyn Forever seem to be included, but other Brunfuss bands like Boss Jim Gettys, Aviso Hara, Bionic Rhoda, and the Urchins - who all frequently play the Jersey shore clubs - were not. And as the awards grow in stature, some clarification should be made about who actually gets to vote for the winners. Right now, that's a mystery (this year, I was asked to be one of the 40 or so voters, but I have no idea who the others were.)

But those are minor considerations; the important thing was the vibe, as a community of musicians, writers, business people, and fans celebrated their scene and each other. It's that kind of camaraderie that's turning Asbury Park into one of the most vital and spirited music scenes in the country, and everyone involved - but most especially Scott Stamper and Peter Mantas of The Saint - deserves credit for making it happen.

LOLLAPALOOZA - Friday, July 11, Downing Stadium, New York City



Story and photos by Jim Testa

Listen to Perry Farrell and he'll have you believing that Lollapalooza represents a cosmic mindfuck bringing peace, love, ecological consciousness and musical satori to a generation splintered and shat upon by the orges of Corporate Rock. It's a beautiful idea, but for the predominantly teenaged audience that actually forks over the 35 bucks to attend this combination music marathon and traveling flea market, Lollapalooza doesn't seem like much more than another rite of summer - a day of sun, music, and community when the most pressing concern on anyone's mind is whether to risk life and limb in the mosh pit or just chill on the sidelines and work on their tan.

The seventh annual edition of Lollapalooza at least tried to live up to Farrell's hippie-dippie vision, returning to a truly alternative mix of sounds and styles after last year's afternoon version of Headbanger's Ball (Rancid, Soundgarden, Metallica.) There was reggae and folk-rock, Britpop and triphop, heavy metal and electronic dance music, and in between the music, diversions for the mind and body. America OnLine showed up with a big exhibit. There was a tent that supposedly embodied Farrell's environmental concerns but it seemed pretty silly - some woman kept yelling "smash the atom" and invited beefy young men to squish a can full of Pepsi with a sledgehammer. (If that's environmental activism, then Gallagher must be the world's greatest ecologist.) As usual, there were rows and rows of booths set up selling t-shirts, records, sunglasses, and homemade jewelry (although the most popular booth was the one that featured a display of bongos.) Overpriced food and soft-drink stands offered \$4 hot dogs and a \$3 glass of lemonade. By far the most popular attraction on the midway were the misting booths, which offered a refreshing respite from the hot, sunny weather.

It's easy to pooh pooh Lollapalooza - it's such a big target - but the weird thing is that even with all the nonsense and distractions, it's still a lot of fun. So much so, in fact, that it's surprising so few fans took advantage of it this year. For the last several years, Lollapalooza would camp for two days at Downing Stadium (an old soccer field located on Randall's Island near Manhattan,) and usually sell out both shows. This year, there was only one date, and according to press reports, half of those tickets went unsold. Still, the place seemed full enough by mid-afternoon, with hordes of fans kicking up huge clouds of dust as they stomped around the baked, sandy soil of Downing Stadium and the accompanying fairgrounds.

It seems silly that the critics dissect the Lollapalooza lineup every year the way baseball fans argue about the starting lineup for the All Star Game. On the bus out to Randall's Island, I struck up a conversation with a group of 17 high school kids who were going to the show together, and it turned out that none of them knew who was playing. (One girl even thought she was going to be seeing Metallica.) Since I went to the show alone,

I spent the day strolling around with my press pass plastered conspicuously on my t-shirt, notebook in hand, and struck up random conversations with groups of kids. A lot of them were really young - 14, 15 - and most were in their teens or early twenties. Korn t-shirts (and the black adidas warmups worn by Korn's frontman, HIV) outnumbered any other band's paraphernalia by about ten to one, although a lot of kids said they had come to see Korn and Tool. T

The crowd swayed and applauded politely for Julian and Damian Marley, sons of the late Bob Marley, who started the day's proceedings with a mellow set of reggae. Thing went a bit rougher for the mannered British pop band James, who had to contend with heckling from a vocal cadre of Korn fans making no attempts to conceal their impatience. James' lead singer Tim Booth shot back with several snide comments, at one point saying, "Melody must be a foreign language to some of you" as his group sailed through their set of lush, romantic pop songs.

For all the lip service given to Lollapalooza's variety, it was the crushing one-dimensional brutality of Korn that really touched off the crowd. Within seconds of the band's entrance, the main stage disappeared behind a



eels



dense cloud of dust, as kamikaze teens pummeled, thrashed, and crowd surfed their way to ecstasy to the band's pummeling metal attack. There's nothing subtle about Korn, just screamed vocals from Adidas-clad frontman Jonathan Davis and bludgeoning thrash rock.

The guru of British triphop, Tricky, followed with an engaging set of swaying dance music, featuring the seductive vocals of his partner and vocalist, Martine Topley-Bird.

Lollapalooza's previous forays into hip hop have met with mixed results - last year's appearance by Wu Tang Clan was an undisciplined, nearly unlistenable mess - but Snoop Doggy Dogg (making his first New York appearance) more than lived up to his reputation as the pre-eminent exponent of West Coast gangsta rap. Standing alone at center stage, backed by a deejay

and several other rappers, Snoop displayed commanding stage presence, leading the crowd through his repertoire of profanity-laced singalongs, as well as a shout-out to the late Tupac Shakur.

Throughout the day, the second stage offered a smorgasbord of lesser-known bands including Inch, Old 97's, Jeremy Toback, Summercamp, and the Eels, whose more accessible pop sounds offered an alternative to the headbanger metal of Korn or hardcore rap of Snoop Doggy Dogg. The second stage also featured the big surprise of the day, an acoustic set by Perry Farrell's Porno For Pyros at around 2 p.m. that caught many by surprise but still drew a large and obviously enthusiastic crowd.

Tool, who took the main stage as the sun set, incorporated dazzling kaleidoscopic animations as a backdrop to their impressive set of hard rock leavened with industrial samples, tribal rhythms, and surging melodies. Lead singer Maynard James Keenan - stripped down to a pair of boxer shorts - and shirtless guitarists Adam Jones and Justin Chancellor provided more than beefcake; their relentless hard rock attack provided more than enough sonic muscle for the testosterone-fueled maniacs in the mosh pit, but offered a hypnotic feast of esoteric melodies and rhythms for more discerning listeners as well.

Orbital's closing set of electronic dance music proved a fascinating look into this burgeoning genre, although most of those in attendance seemed more intent on finding lost friends and making their way to the parking lots than focusing on the group's exotic stage show. Brothers Phil and Paul Hartnoll comprise the core of Orbital, which uses sequencers, samplers, and tape loops rather than traditional live instruments, as well as dizzying video projections and dancers garbed in exaggerated costumes as spacemen and angels. Unfortunately, most of the visual effects couldn't be seen from a distance. But if nothing else, Orbital's cerebral soundscapes provided a soothing musical balm after a day of visceral and exhausting entertainment.

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BUSH TETRAS

Fourteen years after they turned the New York club scene on its head, the Bush Tetras are back and finding that the music world is still overrun by 'Too Many Creeps'



Every so often, a song comes along that freezes a moment in time, perfectly capturing the moment and place when it was made. The Bush Tetras' "Too Many Creeps" is one of those special records. Its primitive production, savagely funky beat, and fuck-you attitude says everything you'll ever need to know about New York City's "No Wave" club scene in the early Eighties.

There weren't a lot of women in rock bands in those days, and those that were tended to play the traditional submissive rocker-girl role. Lydia Lunch broke the mold, and the three women in the Bush Tetras - bassist Laura Kennedy, guitarist Pat Place, and vocalist Cynthia Sley - followed her lead, creating music that was boldly artistic and powerfully sexual without compromising their femininity. With male drummer Dee Pop, the Bush Tetras became one of the most important bands in New York during their short existence, eventually dissolving in 1983.

Those original four members would all go on to play in other important bands and leave their mark on New York's sonic landscape, reuniting every so often to give it another go. In 1995, Jim Fouratt - an architect of the early New York club scene back when he ran Danceteria - more or less tricked the Bush Tetras into getting together one more time for a benefit, and this time, it clicked. The group is back together again, and 14 years after officially disbanding has finally released its first true full-length album, *Beauty Lies* on Mercury Records. The band will also turn up on Lifebeat's tribute compilation to Iggy Pop, coming out this fall, with their rendition of "Sister Midnight," and appeared in the film *Basquiat* performing their "Can't Be Funky."

To be honest, I found *Beauty Lies* to be something of a disappointment; it had none of the urgency or throbbing vitality I remembered from the band's original recordings. But given the Bush Tetras' undeniable place in rock and roll history, I wanted to get their story. And after talking with drummer Dee Pop one night after rehearsal, it became clear that my expectations and the band's aspirations were miles apart. They are still the Bush Tetras; it's everything else that's changed... - Jim Testa

Q: The obvious first question is why you decided to reform after so many years?

Dee: We were basically maneuvered into this situation. I should backtrack by saying that since we broke up in 1983, we had gotten back together three or four times for reunions. Every time we did it, we'd get together and think, this could be really good, this could be fun, and then we'd play a while and go, 'naaaah, I got other things to do, see ya later.' So we'd do our reunion shows and play a bunch of old songs and go on our way. We did it in 1990 or '91 and that time we did try to get back together, and it just didn't work. This time, Jim Fouratt got us together to do a benefit, and basically told everyone individually that he's spoken to everyone us individually and everybody else said they'd love to do it. He did that with everybody and when we finally got together for practice, we realize what he'd done and that he'd basically bamboozled us. Which was fine. So we did this reunion show, which was two Aprils ago, and it went really well. For whatever reasons... Sometimes you go on family reunions and you go, not that bunch of cousins, I really don't want to see them again. But this time it was like, god, I wish we'd gotten together sooner. This time it all fit together like a really old T-shirt that you really like. So we continued. And it got a fairly good response. Basically we got a bunch of old people who remembered us to come to our shows, and we started writing again.

What you have to understand is that most bands... take Sonic Youth, they've done like ten albums now. And we still hadn't done our first. In ten albums, a band progresses with each other, and they go from Step A to Step B. When the Bush Tetras first got together, we all had very common interests and influences and reference points. Now we come back in '95 and it's been 14 years, what are you listening to these days? And we talked to each other and for a little bit there, we were worlds apart. People had gone in different directions, or they hadn't gone in any direction because, like Laura, for instance, had basically left music altogether. She had her family



and her job and that's what she was doing, and we came along and said, 'guess what? We're here to disrupt your life again.' So we had to check our influences against each other, and had to work out what we could each keep and what would work as Bush Tetras. That was two years ago, but now, we're really tight again and all on the same wavelength.

Q: Obviously when you first got back together, you were just doing the old stuff. But when I saw you at CBGB recently, you didn't even do "Too Many Creeps." Did it take a while for you to be confident enough in your new material to play sets without relying on the old hits to get you over?

Dee: That's really not what it's like. Me and Pat have really grown as musicians and some of that old stuff really bores us. It even bored us back then. Bush Tetras played a lot back then. There were two years when we played 200 shows each year. And that's a lot of shows for a band like that. So you get tired of playing the same songs over and over. But it's not only that the material bored us. In the last two years, every band in the world from that era got back together again and it just seemed like Golden Oldies time, and I didn't want to be doing that. We were actually offered a package tour where it would have been us, the Buzzcocks, Gang of Four, and the Dickies, and we just said no. We don't want to go out and just play all our old songs. It didn't musically interest us. We have other things to say and do. Even the stuff on the new album, as much as I like it, there's stuff we're still coming up with where we're finally finding our niche. Those old songs are a part of us and we do still play them, we'd just rather be playing newer stuff. We played four songs last month, and at each show we did fairly different sets. Some nights we did slow sets, sad poppy songs that people wouldn't associate with Bush Tetras. And other nights we'd do harder, heavier stuff, like the set we did at Squeezebox my wife said we sounded like a metal band.

Q: Jumping back and forth from the club scene of 1980 to today, what would you say have been the biggest changes? As I recall, the Bush Tetras were one of the first bands fronted by women



that really made an impact.

Dee: I remember the first time I played CBGBs, the headliner played two sets, an early show and a late show, and there were two opening bands, one that opened the early show and one that opened the late show. I think it made it highly competitive, you had to be really good to get a show, and it cut out a lot of crap real quick at that level. Today there are so many bands and all these clubs with these marathon 10-band bills, really anybody can get a show.

In terms of what we meant, I think there were a lot more women around back then than we tend to remember, but most of them tended to still be traditional rock girls. Lydia Lunch did a lot to change that, of course. And Pat (Place) came from a very different perspective on playing guitar. She's basically self-taught and played, I think, more like a painter, as opposed to someone who learned bar chords and played Chuck Berry songs at the high school dance growing up.

But now, I think there's just so much business involved, and it's all play-by-numbers. I don't think there are too many people out there who base their music on being individuals, or their own particular visions, as opposed to the idea 'we should wear these kinds of clothes and sound like these bands, and if we get all that down pat, we might have a chance.' As opposed to going against all the grains in the world, where there is no sub-genre you fit in. The music I grew up on, a lot of it was really different. Even radio programming was pretty free form when I was growing up. I could hear some of the later, funkier Miles Davis on WNEW next to a rock song next to some folkie thing. I saw bills or read about shows at the Fillmore East where you'd have three acts that were very different on the same bill. Today you'd never have that, you have nine ska bands on the same bill, or nine metals on a bill. But you'd never mix them, unless you have a promoter who's really adventurous, and you don't find that too often since most of them are in it to make money, and you don't make money taking chances.

Q: Let's talk about the new album. A lot of your old fans are probably going to be surprised because there isn't much that sounds like "Too Many Creeps."

Dee: When we went to make the record, we didn't go into the studio deliberately trying to make any one type of record. It was just, okay, let's make Bush Tetras songs. Whenever we try to do something - try to write a song in a certain style - it's impossible, it never works, it just comes out a Bush Tetras song. I've been getting all sorts of weird comments from people, not bad or anything, but either they like the like the older songs better, or they like the new songs but they like the way the old stuff was recorded better. All sorts of things. I actually just came from practice tonight and all we worked on were funky songs. But then Pat will come in and want to play White Zombie riffs. So you never know where we'll go next. Sometime we'll do a blues song and it'll come out like a hip hop song. Sometimes we'll take a slow song and just want to slam it.

A lot of the new record doesn't sound like what people think of as Bush Tetras. Like on some songs, Pat is playing chords, which she never used to play. But that's what happens when you take out 15 years of a band's existence. You have to go from A to Z without ever seeing B, C, D, E, and F, all the way through. The next record will probably be even weirder and people will really wonder what it is, but that's what we do now.

One thing I want to point out is that the record was produced by Nona Hendryx and she's the reason that this record sounds the way it does. And let me say this, she is the one person in the music industry who genuinely has a heart of gold. She talked to each one of us individually, at our own level, about our instruments. She was totally on top of everything.

Q: One more thing... You originally signed to do this record with Tim Kerr Records and then because their relationship with Mercury was dissolved, you somehow ended up on Mercury Records, so now you have a major label deal. But I get the impression that you have pretty reasonable expectations of what that really means and doesn't mean in terms of your career. How are you approaching the whole thing?

Dee: Well, no one is quitting their jobs. No one has asked Mercury for lots of money to live off of. Basically, we just want to make music, and if Mercury wants to put it out, that's really great, because that's what we want. And if they like it, hopefully they'll do the job it takes to let people know it's out there. It won't be easy. We're older than a lot of bands, and we've been away for a long time. We don't fit into any little niche. So I don't know what Mercury is going to do with us.

I've never been on a major label, and it's a harder, weirder thing to be on a major label. It's a big corporation and you have to deal with them that way, you have to deal with it on a purely commercial level. This is a business. You are here to sell records. And of course we want to sell records, but we want to be musicians too. But it's one of those things where people today can't just be musicians, they have to be accountants and managers and booking agents and everything else it takes. I've learned an incredible amount of music business in the last few years, some before Mercury but a lot since then, and it's a eye opener. I just want to play my drums and go to my gig and then go home. But I have to do all this other stuff too. I have to learn all this jargon and deal with all these people. I have a product manager, and the guy who deals with the little stores, and the guy who deals with the big stores, and the guy in charge of radio, the guy in charge of just college radio, the guy in charge of high-school radio, the guy in charge of *transistor* radios! All these different people, I have to know all of them and deal with them. When I was at Tim Kerr, I knew the guy who owned the label and I could just call him up and say, 'hey, watcha doing?' I can't do that with Mercury.

Let me just say this. Mercury would have to do an awful lot to me to make me want to stop playing my drums. We could get dropped tomorrow and I'd still be playing. The Bush Tetras could break up and I'd want to play. And so would Pat, and probably Cynthia. If I had to play for free in the park, I'd still be playing drums. If I couldn't find a band and had to do solo drum shows, I'd still be playing. This is what I love to do. And I'm going to keep doing it until I have to stop.

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MISFITS - *American Psycho* (Geffen) This is probably the most difficult review I'll ever have to do! The coolest cult band ever is back after a 14 year recording hiatus. A few things have changed since 1983, a new singer and new material. The hardest thing for an old band to do is introduce a new singer, especially if the old one was the main songwriter. My emotions are very mixed about this! I grew up on the original MISFITS and I consider myself one of their biggest fans, I can sing every word and play every song. Musically, the MISFITS are stronger and better than they've ever been. The Ciafra brothers (Mo and Doyle) have used their own band (the short lived & underappreciated) Kryst The Conqueror as the backdrop (straight forward and power chord oriented) here, yet pull in those original elements from the old days. The real mixed emotions surround Michael Graves. Let's face it, he was hired because vocally he is a Danzig impersonator. Sometimes I liked his songs and other times I wondered what the Hell he was thinking (especially "Crimson Ghost," which really stinks.) There are some great songs on *American Psycho*, such as "Blacklight," "Hate the Living, Love the Dead" and "Hunger". The songs are all meant to be sing-a-longable (it's a word now); some fit that mold and others are overkill. Now, I've listened to this about 70 times in the last two days and it's starting to grow on me (I want it to). Over time the new MISFITS will be a force for reckoning, and I hope they get all the acclaim they ever deserved. But for now, I'm putting *Earth AD* back on the stereo. - Gary McGarvey Jr.

THE MISFITS - *American Psycho* (Geffen) What the hell is this? New album by a reformed Misfits minus Glenn Danzig, and boy does it show. You do have Doyle and Jerry from the first go round (but that doesn't seem to help much), and new vocalist Michael Graves is a pale imitation of Glenn (The album credits list a vocal instructor, which shows that somebody wanted him to sound too much like Danzig. Blechhhh!), and drummer Dr. Chud is from the hamfist school of drumming (TOO MUCH THUD!!). The song titles are better than the actual songs, the guitars are too heavy and processed, and the whole thing is overproduced and flat. And after years of Misfits-inspired metalcore, it was hard listening to this without thinking that this was a band aping the Misfits. And in a way, I guess it is. There's even a mid-tempo, almost Danzig-like tune on here that will probably score with the idiot set. Summed up neatly, this falls somewhere between *Earth A.D.* and the first Danzig album, neither of which I like. Face it fellas, there's no Misfits without Glenn Danzig, like it or not. - David Brock

THE MISFITS

THE MISFITS - Box Set (Caroline) Sweet jumpin' Jesus! In all my born days, I never thought I'd see this! I will admit that after 6 or 7 years as a near-fanatical listener, I became a bit prejudiced (read:hated) toward the Misfits around 1988 when all the greaseball metalheads started wearing Misfits shirts (courtesy of Metallica) and Glenn Danzig started his metal posturing, but that's just killing the messenger. It took purchasing this box set to remind me what a scorching punk band these guys were! 4 discs, 104 tracks, 6 complete albums (*EvilLive*, *Legacy Of Brutality*, *Earth A.D.*, *Collection I and II*, and the never-before-released *Static Age*), along with singles (like the infamous "Cough/Cool" and a never before released "Spook City USA") and alternate takes, which means some of the tracks are repeated, but who cares? The only thing missing from this set that I would have liked to have seen was *Walk Among Us*, but I guess for legal reasons none of these mixes were included, but you get alternate takes of these tracks, so at least they're represented. The packaging is incredible. The CD cases are black, with stamped silver type, and the *Static Age* CD comes in a blood red case with raised silver lettering, AND they toss in an enameled Fiend Club pin, all wrapped up in a red faux-velvet lined black coffin. Also included is a great full-color book (with liner notes by Eerie Von), and lyrics to all of the songs, which answered a lot of the questions I had over the years about just what the hell ol' Glenn was saying. This thing comes with a hefty price tag (over 50 bucks), but if you want to piss and moan about the price, just remember that for what you could buy one of the original 7 inches for, you can get this entire set, AND it doesn't sound like shit, so fuck those collector scum who are only into it for the bucks. You just want the single for prestige anyway, so why not invest in something you can listen to and enjoy. A must have collection. - David Brock

MISFITS - *Static Age* (Caroline) This is the missing link of the Misfits saga - what would have been their first LP, recorded late at night with free studio time that the band received in return for relinquishing the name Blank Records. Although the original *Static Age* LP was never released, most of these tracks eventually surfaced on EP's, bootlegs, the *Legacy Of Brutality* compilation, or the recent boxed set, including such classics as "Last Caress," "We Are 138," and "She." (One track here, "In The Doorway," was never mixed or released before, which is the bait Caroline will use to hook Misfits completists.) This is the Misfits sound most of us fell in love with - the Ramones meet the Stooges meet The Late Late Show's horror-movie marathon - and the mushy mix and half-assed takes only make it that much more endearing. If you don't already have the boxed set, it's an album you'll want to own in its entirety. - Jim T.



EVELYN FOREVER:

Who they are: Mark Sanderlin, guitar, vocals; Sherif "Reef" Fanous, guitar, vocals; Eddie Yoo, bass, vocals; Matt Lewis, drums.

What they are: Boy-next-door power-pop from New Brunswick, NJ... if the boy next door was Paul McCartney.

Who they sound like: Herman's Hermits meets the Raspberries.

Best quality: Harmonies up the wazoo.

Watch For: Debut album, *Evelyn Forever*, coming this summer on The Airplay Label.

Although they could pass for high schoolers, three members of Evelyn Forever are Rutgers alumni and all are in their early twenties. Eddie actually started out in a hardcore thrash band called Machine-gun Skunk but developed an interest in pop music while rooming with Mark in college. "Mark actually influenced me a lot in terms of the kind of music I listened to," he says. "I never really started writing pop songs until we lived together."

It wasn't until a few years later, though, that Eddie and Matt started the band that would evolve into Evelyn Forever. When the original bassist of that group flaked out, Eddie recruited Reef. "I originally wanted Reef to play bass, because I wanted to play keyboards," says Eddie. "But that didn't work out, and he's too good a guitar player to waste, so I picked up the bass." A chance encounter with Mark reunited the two old roommates and, recalls Reef, "Mark just kind of showed up for practice one day." A band was born.

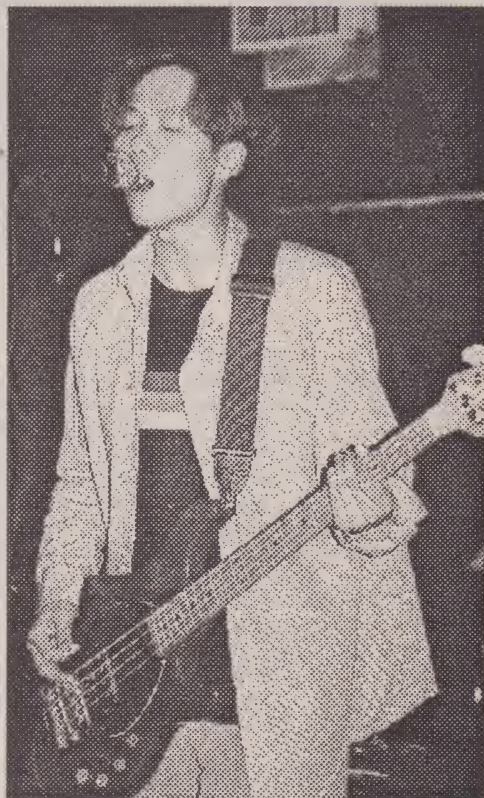
Mark brought songs with him, and in the beginning, "it was pretty much either Mark's songs or my songs," recalls Eddie. But Mark adds, "Now, less than 50 percent of the songs are by any one person. Most of them are group efforts, collaborations, at least in some degree."

The harmonies were something that the band knew they wanted from the start. It just didn't happen right away. "We couldn't do it at all at first," says Mark. "It took a lot of practice. We knew we wanted to do it, because we love the Beatles and we love the way harmonies sound. It adds so much to the music. So many bands just miss out by just having one singer."

"We still cringe at practice sometimes, when someone hits those sour notes," says Eddie. "But all in all, we just work it out until we get all the parts down."

"All of us aren't into bands with just one singer," says Eddie. "We love the Beatles, we love the Kinks."

"I don't even think we realized why we didn't like those bands with just the one singer, at least I didn't," adds Reef, "until we real-



Eddie

POWER P P



Matt

ized how good our songs sounded with the harmonies."

The one notable exception, they agree, is Nirvana. "But collectively, we all really like the Beatles," says Reef. "We're all into the group idea of a band, rather than the band with the front man," says Eddie. "We don't like the Pearl Jam kind of thing, with one guy acting up there all angst-ridden and everything. It's a little too much for me," adds Mark. "I was never a Nineties music person. I grew up with the Replacements, that was my band. There are some Nineties bands I'm into, but it was always like Teenage Fan Club or the more obscure, poppy stuff."

"Yeah, Mark was always the guy into the cool music," says Eddie. "It wasn't until I met him that I started listening to that kind of stuff. I was always into Ratt and stuff like that."

With two years of practicing and a solid year of gigs under their belts, Evelyn Forever now faces the formidable challenge of trying to win over New Brunswick, a music scene that worships loud, raw, raunchy rock.

"To tell you the truth, we do kind of feel like outcasts sometimes," says Mark. "We definitely don't fit in with what's always been popular here, especially at the Court Tavern. We've only played there once and it was kind of a disaster. The thing is, you play there and everyone in the crowd is in other bands, so it tends to be really cliquey. They all stick together and we're newer and not really part of their scene yet. And musically, it's just such a different thing."

The band fares much better at New Brunswick's other mainstay, the Melody Bar. "I think the thing is that when we play the Melody, the people who come are just people, they're not people from other bands, if you know what I mean," says Eddie.

"I don't know, I think there are at least three or four bands in New Brunswick who sound like a cross between Live and Pearl Jam," says Mark. "Or they do the R.E.M. thing with the acoustic guitar. And they all sound exactly the same to me."

"I think it's just that we're coming from a totally different perspective," says Eddie. "A lot of bands seem to have a really cool style, and the lyrics don't really matter. The vocalist is just there to be another instrument. But with us, the vocals are a big part. It's the songwriting that comes first. I don't think we've ever written a song without words. We've never written a song where there was just music and the words came later. They always come together. And that's the kind of music we like too."

And for the time being, New Brunswick will do just fine. "We're happy where we are," says Eddie. "Some people know us, and we have good shows there. And I guess it's better than a lot of other places."

"I think we're becoming associated with the New Brunswick scene," says Mark. "The only people who don't like us are the members of the other bands. The general public certainly seems to like us. Everytime we play we get a good response."

"I really like The Melody," says Eddie, "because on any given night, the place will be packed, and if the band is good, the people will stay upstairs. The people there tend to be very supportive."

The band has a second home base at The Saint in Asbury Park, where they've developed a good draw. The Saint's Peter Mantas and his partner, Joel Powers, are behind The Airplay Label, which is releasing Evelyn Forever's first LP. "I loved this band from the start," says Mantas. "And then I test-drove them. I let them open here for some big bands - Rake's Progress, Nerf Herder - and every band that's heard them has loved these guys."

"You have to give Pete credit, because he was the first guy who gave us any attention," says Mark. "He recognized from the beginning that despite our limitations, we were on to something. And we've just gotten better. And now he's doing so much, especially with the record and everything."

"We're really happy with the way things have turned out," says Eddie, "working with Pete and everything. The thing is, we like



Mark

Pete, as a person. It's not just being signed to a label. We know him. And he's not going to just ignore us because some other project comes along. So we have at least a little security." After opening for a few major label bands - including one ex-major label band that had been signed and quickly dropped - Evelyn Forever seem to realize that a big contract isn't the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow that some young bands think.

"We've seen the scary side of getting side," says Mark. "We know how easy it is to get left out in the cold. Those people don't realize that they're playing with people's lives."

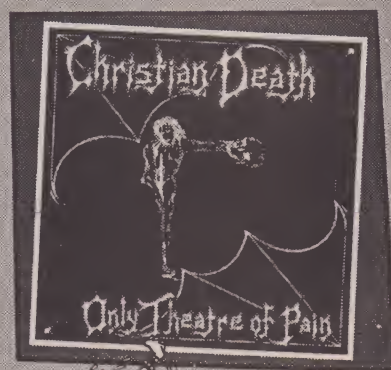
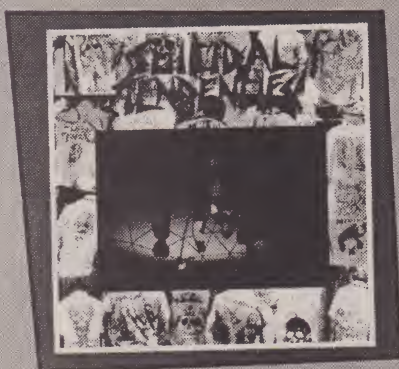
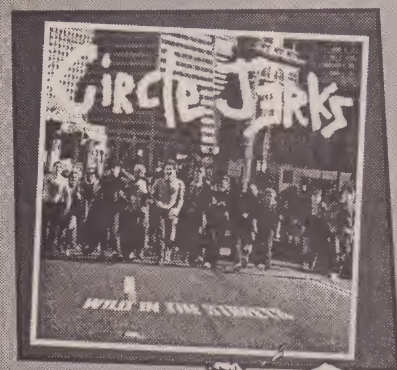
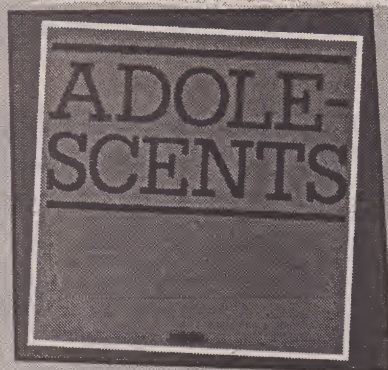
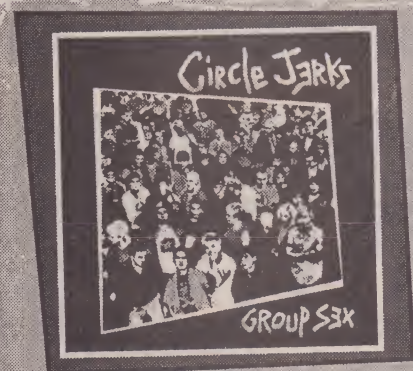
So for the time being, Evelyn Forever knows what's in store this summer: More gigs, trying to win over those other New Brunswick bands, and then the album release, which should be out by the time you read this. And after that, who knows?

Today, New Brunswick. Tomorrow, the world... Or at least Piscataway.

You can contact Evelyn Forever by writing The Airplay Label, PO Box 851, Asbury Park NJ 07712, or by email to: Gimchipop@aol.com.



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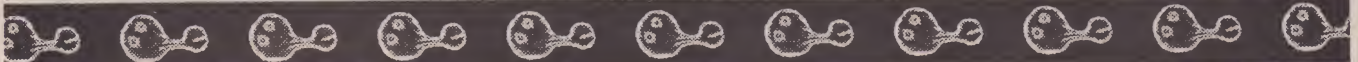
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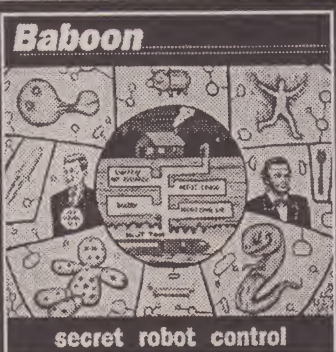
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Sidedoor Johnnies

Dan Skinner - vocals, guitar
Mike Skinner - drums, vocals
Mika Grady - bass

Back in the good old days, well-heeled young men who dropped by theater dressing rooms to pick up the chorus girls were known as stagedoor Johnnies. The Sidedoor Johnnies, on the other hand, just want to rock.

The Brooklyn-based trio - who have been tearing up the New York club scene and do a ridiculous amount of touring for such a young band - came together in June, 1996, and played their first real gig at that year's WE Festival in Wilmington, North Carolina. They were sleeping on the floor of Kenyata Sullivan's house when Kenyata and I tip-toed in at 6 a.m. and I inadvertently stepped on singer/guitarist Dan Skinner.

Flash-forward a year later: The 'Johnnies have released their first CD, the self-produced and self-released *Fineline* on the band's Good Guppy label, and returned to Wilmington for the second WE Festival, where we took a few minutes from our hectic schedule of drinking beer and watching bands to do this interview. A week later, the band would drive back to Wilmington again, this time for a prestige slot at the more industry-oriented Mid-Atlantic Sound, Surf, & Skate Symposium (MASSS).

The Sidedoor Johnnies actually formed just a few weeks before that first WE Fest show in May, '96. Brothers Mike (drums, vocals) and Dan Skinner (vocals, guitar) had always played together growing up but were separated when Mike left to attend college in Binghamton, New York. That's where he met bassist Mika Grady. After college, Mike returned home to play again with Dan, and eventually convinced Mika to join them.

"It was a big decision, leaving Binghamton, but it was definitely the right one," says Grady. "It's absolutely been great so far."

The band's high-octane blend of frenetic guitar, boyish vocals, furious drums, melodic bass, and keenly original and multi-faceted songwriting make the group hard to peg. They're not really punk, although they're obviously committed to the Do It Yourself punk-rock



aesthetic. Hoboken indie-rock guru Chris Butler - whose own career dates back to the days of Tin Huey and the Waitresses - thinks so highly of the band's eclectic range, he calls them a "New Wave band," on the order of such multi-talented ensembles as the early Talking Heads or Blondie. But the band's facility for both melodic pop tunes and spastic sonic freakouts reminds me of nothing so much as the early Replacements.

"I actually think of our sound is pretty cohesive, although we do pride ourselves on doing different things," says Dan.

"When we were putting the CD together and trying to decide what order to put the songs, it did freak us out a little, because we realized that a lot of these songs were really different," adds Mika. "We were afraid that maybe they sounded too different, that we didn't have our own sound.

But I think that little things - Mike's style of drumming, and Dan's voice in particular - just sound like Sidedoor Johnnies, and that leads to cohesiveness, even though we do tend to dabble."

Musically, these guys come at their craft from three different directions. "Mike and I actually liked a lot of the same bands growing up but that all changed when he went to college," says Dan. "For a while there, I hated the stuff he was listening to and he didn't like the music I was into. But I guess we're getting a little closer. I've finally accepted Captain Beefheart."

"And I guess you could say that I'm right in the middle," adds Mika. "If you took Mike and Dan's tastes and took the





Sidedoor Johnnies

average, that's the kind of stuff I like."

"That sort of works with the way we write songs too," notes Dan. "Usually one of us will come up with an idea that's pretty firm and then the other two will slaughter it to pieces and completely change it around, and by the time it's a song, it's this completely different thing. And often we don't like the things the others do to it, but then after a week or so of playing it, we'll come around and admit it's pretty cool." One example of that process is "Lily Tilt," one of the most impressive songs on *Fineline*. "I hated that song for months, in fact I wouldn't even play it," says Mike. "Mika and Dan would have to do it at the end of rehearsal by themselves. But now it's a lot of fun to play. That's the song that we get a lot of Beatles comparisons for, which is always nice."

But it's not just the music that makes the Sidedoor Johnnies unique; it's the group's organizational skills as well. "The three of us work like crazy on this band," says Mike, who also holds down a full-time job at Sony's recording studios. Although Dan attended college this past Spring and Mika worked temp jobs, all three members think of the band as their occupation. "We really tried to do too much at first," says Dan. "We had to learn that bringing people onboard who aren't directly involved with the creation of the music really helps. Now we have friends helping us with things like radio and press. And since we set up the band as a corporation, we were able to get interns from my college, so we'll be having them help us with things like the mailing list and mail order."

That organization, Dan believes, is what is separating the Sidedoor Johnnies from so many of their peers. "I see so many bands around us who just struggle and get nowhere, because they don't know what they're supposed to be doing," he says. "We have a long way to go, but at least we have some momentum with people who are working hard on different aspects of the business, like distribution, sales, promotion, and advertising. It's really nice to have a little bit of a company set up that's behind us."

"We're trying really hard to keep this DIY," adds Mike. "A lot of the people who are working with us have never done this before, but they're really interested. So we're trying to create something that lets them become involved and help make this whole thing happen."

Things have really picked up for the group since the release of its debut CD last month. The band has been shooing away major label scouts and concentrating on bookings. "We don't want to sign to a label right now, we still have a long way to go on our own," says Dan. "We just want some help getting shows so we can tour. We don't have anything against major labels per se, we just like to see what we're doing in terms of the way they measure their bands. There's lots to be learned from the way they do things, even though we don't have millions of dollars to waste."

"Actually," adds Mike, "there's things to be learned both ways. Things not to do and things to do. They obviously have a lot of success because they can somehow get all these horrible bands on the radio. Well, if we're a good band, it should take less effort, but we can maybe use the same channels they do."

"It's funny, some of the people who are helping us actually work at the big labels, in internships or whatever, but there, everyone has one specific job," says Dan. "Like, your job might be to get Aerosmith played on the radio, and that's all you do all day. With us, everybody has to do a little bit of everything, so you get to see what goes in every sector, you get to meet all the sleazebags in the music industry and not just one little part. Which is nice, I guess."

"DIY doesn't necessarily mean stay tiny," notes Mika. "Fugazi is a band that's as DIY as you can get, and they're tremendously huge, and making lots of money too. And that's fine. It's just that this is ours. We created it, and we don't want someone else screwing it up. We don't want to put our fate in the hands of people we don't trust. And we just trust ourselves right now to do things the right way more than anybody else." - Jim Testa

PLAN A PROJECT

Interview & photos by Eva Silverman

As far as the local NJ scene goes, Plan A Project have to be one of the best, most together bands - and personally, my favorite. I remember the first time I ever heard them, they played a set on the college station at FDU. Ever since the night I taped that show they were mine. I can't find enough good things to say about them, so I'll just try to give you some idea of what they are like as a band, and as people. For starters, Plan A isn't one of those "we're more punk than you" kinda bands, they are totally w/o ego and don't put anything into their music that isn't meant to be there. They are true to their music and themselves. No bullshit, just punk.

This is one band that I completely fell in love with ...when I hear that they are playing a show ...my face lights up! These boyz are probably some of the nicest people you'll meet. They have a lot to say and their punk/ska/ rawkin' music is to die for. Their show on March 29 was probably about the 10th time (or so) that I've seen them, and I was lucky enough to interview them. So here we go....

Q: Introduce yourselves.

Dennis: I'm Dennis, I play guitar.

Tim: I'm Tim, I try to play drums.

Dan: Dan. Bass.

Q: I'm Eva the interviewer, and that's Chris, he's holding the tape recorder! So, where do you guys picture yourself in ten years?

Dennis: In ten years?

Dan: Awww shit.

Tim: I'm gonna be wearin' a John Deere hat and drivin' a tractor.

Dennis: I'll be..doin' what I'm doin' now, same thing.

Dan: I dunno I'm not a fortune teller. Next question.

Q: When did you start playing together?

Dan: Dennis and I started playing together about... you mean music?.

Dennis: Probably about two and a half years ago.

Dan: Sexually, five years ago (joking).

Dennis: With Tim it's probably been about...

Tim: I've been playing drums for quite a while ... probably like four years, something like that.

Q: What bands were you in before Plan A Project?

Tim: I was in Heckle.

Dennis: I was in... uh... Dennis.

Dan: uh....blah..

Q: Can you define your music for me?

Dan: Like style? I don't know, we don't really have a style.

Dennis: We can reiterate how other people define us.

Tim: Its more like the Operation Ivy kinda...

Dan: You had to fuckin' say it, didn't ya?

Tim: I know....I had to say it... (ha ha)

Dennis: It's just straight from the heart.

Tim: Yeah... The stuff that we're writing now... I don't think is anything like Operation Ivy.



Dennis: It never was meant to be anyway.

Q: What are your prime influences?

Dan: Me, I listen to everything... pretty much every kind of music, not just like what reflects in the band. I mean last thing I like... I hate root ska.. I hate it... So uh...

Dennis: There's so many good bands out there that really stuck with me over the years.

Tim: Yeah, I don't put all my music into one category, 'cuz I like a lot of stuff... You might assume that I'm a big hardcore fiend cuz I was in Heckle, but ya know I'm also straight edge positive... ha ha. Before I was in Heckle, I didn't know much about hardcore 'cuz I just wasn't into it that much, but I kinda gradually got into it 'cuz that's how the music evolved..

Dennis: Enough about Heckle..this is uh... (Plan A Project!)

Tim: Yeah, sorry about that...

Q: So what did you guys do before the show?

Dennis: I got some sushi.

Tim: I got a tuna roll.

Dan: I got a Molson Gold.

Tim: Yeah we went down to Pleasurable Piercings and looked at all the perverted piercings that you can get. You can get your grundle pierced!

Dan: We were thinking about it and none of us have piercings. We're not that punk yet. That's our future, we're all planning on cutting mohawks and...

Tim: No fucking way, dude, I wouldn't be caught dead with a mohawk!

Dan: Sarcasm...note!

Q: What message would you like to get across to the people that listen to your music?

Dan: Lately I've been trying to stop telling people what to do. I'll put in my two cents and if they'd like to talk to me or any of us they are more than welcome to.

Dennis: We aren't trying to force anything on anyone, it's just what we think and that's about it. It's just expressing our beliefs.

Q: What is your favorite place to play?

Dennis: So far?

Dan: I dunno. CBGB was... actually no.

Dennis: I thought the Wetlands... When we played there, it was real cool.

Dan: It sounded good... like Philadelphia kidz are real cool. Each show is different. I'm sick of VFW's, personally. Like the kids that come out to VFW's - I mean, granted, I mean they are mostly local kids and most of them are just getting into the scene, but then... I like to play suburban areas and inner cities. We played Philadelphia and it was a pretty shitty area and all the squatter kids came out. Not that they liked us, but they came out. It's not really the place, it's the people.

Dennis: The Sleeping Turtle in New Paltz was real cool.

Tim: That was real cool.

Dennis: That's just a chill place.

Tim: I mean regardless of how we play, I just thought it was a real cool place to play.

Dan: You're gonna have a pain in the ass typing all this shit out.

Q: I'll manage..

Tim: hhhhaay haa (Simpson's voice).

Q: What's that from?

Tim: That's the Simpsons!..

Dan: You lose so many punk points for not knowing!

Dennis: ha ha ha

Dan: You didn't know that!...ahh interview's over!

Q: Your first 7 inch "Use your head" is really political and "lets unite!" oriented. What's the new one gonna sound like?

Dan: I mean, there's always political records. We aren't a political band. We have influences of everything, we have songs about kids that got dicked over and more or less political songs. Personally I don't like saying "Fuck the government." I just write lyrics and

hopefully you can apply a couple different messages whether it be political or personal.

Dennis: The new one relates more to music.

Tim: Music like that... you know, you say "Fuck the government" and that's fine, but what are you going to do about it? It's kinda like a sit on you ass kinda statement.

Dan: It should be known but it's also like beating a dead horse, it's been said so many different times in so many different ways..

Tim: Centuries.

Dennis: Its more like...we gotta put our heads together.

Q: Any plans to do a tour?

Dan: Yeah we're going on tour this summer. Its probably gonna be a week and a half tour; actually, there's a possibility that were touring with Against All Authority, hopefully.

Dennis: We're gonna go out midwest.

Tim: I think Chicago.

Dan: ...and then when it gets cold out we are probably going to go down south where its warmer.

Q: Do you guys have any funny story tales from yr shows?

Dennis: Just once... we got kicked out for being naked..

Dan: Yeah, we got in a crazy fight.

Tim: When was this? I wasn't in the band when this happened.

Dan: It was with a kid contradicting himself many times and pretty much it was a fucking really... It was a dance we were playing and we didn't know it, and we had fun and this lady came up to me and started threatening me.

Q: What's yr view on punk for the masses and the way its been



hurled into the mainstream?

Dan: That's a contradiction right there. Punk and masses. It's like "alternative." It's the same thing. There's no alternative... alternative to what?..

Tim: It's like a widespread counter-culture. Counter-culture for everybody.

Dennis: Everybody has their own ideas and its just...

Dan: That's what we were talking about before...I mean a lot of bands, I could give you a list a mile long of bands that are all about money. To me, when you cross that line in punk, it's just entertainment rather than a feeling. Sometimes. I mean, that's my view on punk in the masses. Personally I don't like it.

Dennis: You gotta be your own person that's what it comes down to. If you're not your own person then it doesn't mean anything.

Tim: So many people try to define punk. In fact, I'm gonna do it right now: Being your own person is punk.

Dan: That's not saying that we are telling everyone else that if you're not your own person that you suck. I'm just saying, question your ideas.

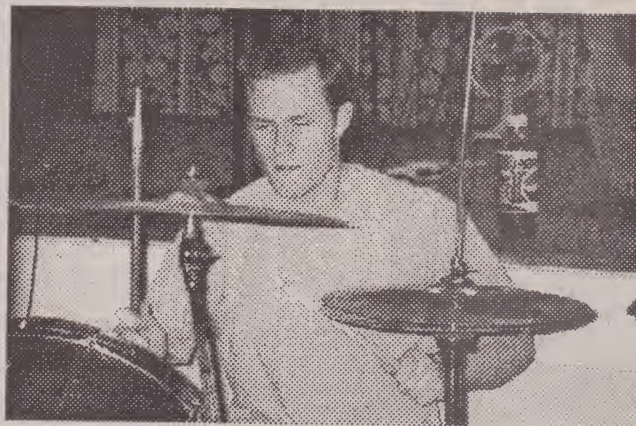
Dennis: You're just kidding yourself if you're trying to be something you're not.

Q: What was the last record that you bought?

Dennis: Against All Authority/ Pist split.

Dan: I've been into a lot of harder stuff lately. Personally like the ska stuff that's everywhere.. including us right now, it's like were trying to... not really shy away from it, but I've been going through a lot of harder stuff lately.

Tim: I just bought a band called The Force...like Star Wars. They are from Grass Valley, California. They are pretty dope. This dude



called Matt Wedgeley sings. They are pretty good. It's like California hardcore.

Q: Ok, this is the last question. Is there anything that I forgot to ask you guys that you'd like to bring up?

Dennis: Just thanks to everyone that supports us and comes to our shows.

Dan: I guess thanks ...You know who you are (me too). Thanks all around!

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Aviso' Hara

New Brunswick has a well-earned reputation for loud-as-fuck guitar bands who know how to rock, but Aviso' Hara throws a nice little spin on the typical Brunfuss sound by layering in a hint of melody and a penchant for imaginative covers, from a sonic overkill version of Prince's "Raspberry Beret" to their take-no-prisoners raveup of "Shout At The Devil." Their set at Jersey Beat's 15th Anniversary Blast at The Saint in Asbury Park left a packed house drooling for more, and I was lucky enough to hang out with the guys for a few days at this year's WE Festival in Wilmington, NC, where this interview took place. - Jim Testa

Ralph Nicastro - vocals, guitar
Dave Urbano - bass
Walter Greene - guitar
Jason "Jay" Reynolds - drums

Q: This interview is really all in the family, since I've known Dave from his Mr. Thumb days and he writes and helps with *Jersey Beat*. But why don't you talk a little about how the four of you came to be a band?

Ralph: Walter and I were playing in Tow, and we were fans of Mr. Thumb, Walter especially. And then Walter and Dave got together, and then Dave asked Walter to keep it in the family and bring me in as the singer, and the three of us just practiced in the basement for months. And we went through, what, seven drummers?

Dave: Every drummer in New Brunswick.

Ralph: And elsewhere. And then Jay joined us a little over a year ago, and it's been kickass ever since.

Q: And Jay had been playing in Ex Vegas until they broke up, which is where I met him.

Dave: Jay was also the last Mr. Thumb drummer.

Q: So it's a typical New Brunswick story - totally incestuous. The second half of the question is, where did the funny name come from?

Dave: Originally the band was just going to be called Aviso, but then Jacko from the Brighton Bar said there already was a band in Alabama called Aviso. Before that, Drummer #6 had wanted to name the band Hara, after this publicist that she worked as an assistant to someplace, just because she thought the name was cool. So okay, after we found out about the other Aviso, we said, we'll take the Hara now, and I added the apostrophe, just to confuse everyone.

Walter: The apostrophe keeps turning up in different spots.

Dave: Yeah. Steve from the label puts it on the right. Sometimes it sits on the left. Sometimes there's no apostrophe.

Q: Which brings us to the generic New Brunswick question: There are 50 loud guitar bands in New Brunswick, what makes Aviso' Hara different?

Jay: I think we're trashy and sonic beyond what anyone else is doing. I think the guitar noise sets us apart.

Ralph: It's not just noise, though.

Dave: Yeah, we're not Deadguy, and we're not Buzzkill. We have more melody than those bands.

Q: What makes the band for me is the dichotomy between the loud noisy guitars and then Ralph's sweet, melodic vocals. I think he's definitely one of the best male singers in New Brunswick, as opposed to the guys who just yell and scream.

Dave: That was something Walter and I conceived early on. We wanted to have this noisy band, but we wanted to have this pop element, not necessarily really obvious but a little more hidden.

Ralph: 'Noise with a pop sensibility.'

Dave: Exactly. Which was one of the reviews we got early on. I think from you. We define ourselves by our friends.

Q: How does the songwriting work?

Dave: It usually starts with me or Walter. Walter writes about 70 percent of the songs, everybody else comes up with the rest. And then once we start learning the song, everybody has a say. We try to objectify it... Well, is this song working?

Ralph: Sometimes it takes three months, sometimes we can get it done in one night.

Dave: Yeah, like we have this new song, and we just learned it and said, okay, that's it, perfect. And there are other songs that we drag out and out and never quite finish. Somebody asked us about our set and Walter said, we're just playing the hits.

Ralph: People ask, where do you put the hits? At the beginning or the end of the set. And we just say, they're all hits.

Q: Ralph, we were talking before and you were saying that you write the lyrics with some weird kind of onomatopoeia?

Ralph: Yeah. Let's say they bring a song in. I take what I sing at practice - I just mumble through the melody - and then whatever that sounds like, I just take all those sounds and make some kind of lyric out of it.

Q: It's like the opposite of REM, where they actually write the lyrics out and then Michael Stipe just mumbles them. [laughter]

Ralph: We don't drink that much. We can't do it that way.

Q: Has that lyrical process ever yielded surprisingly good results?

Ralph: It's kind of stark, but I kind of like it. If I didn't like it, I wouldn't use it. And Dave writes some lyrics, Walter writes some lyrics, Jason doesn't write any lyrics. Jason's just our style manager.

Q: The band's been doing pretty well for just, what is it, a year and a half that you've been together?

Dave: Yeah. We've recorded three times in a year and a half. We're definitely moving.

Ralph: It was slow out of the gate, but we're definitely getting our stride. Gaining some credibility.

Walter: We've reached the point where the songwriting is at a good point now, so we don't have to play songs we don't want to play anymore. We can actually not play songs we want to play now and save them for another night. It's not like having a couple of clunkers and having to play them because you don't have enough songs yet.



Dave: At least, that's from our side of the stage. The audience might think something else. (laughs)

Q: Still, that's a lot better than a lot of bands we know, who live on one set of songs for two years and never write any new material.

Walter: We've always got two or three new songs going on. If we had more time to practice, we'd be amazing. There's nothing wrong with having 20 songs to choose from.

Q: How close are you to the next step, which would be the first full-length album?

Dave: I have in mind recording this August again. We have a new 7 inch coming out this summer, and then we're doing a radio promotion in the fall... We like to overlap stuff so we're always busy. So we'll probably record the next two or three songs in August or so and then we'll be looking for someone to put out an album for us.

Q: That's one thing New Brunswick doesn't have yet, is a strong local label to put out albums. But other than that, let's give the scene a report card. How do you rate New Brunswick as a place to be a band right now?

Dave: Buzzkill has a new record out on Alternative Tentacles. Deadguy just put out a new CD. The Powerbunny compilation CD was a big record for New Brunswick. Because it was actually a good quality record. Jeff (Scavone) is great, he's putting out some 7 inches too, he's really trying to get it together.

Q: No one doubts that there's always a lot of stuff going on in New Brunswick, but as you know, my pet peeve with New Brunswick has always been the Big Fish, Little Pond syndrome. It seems like a lot of New Brunswick bands get to the point where they can pack the Court Tavern and they're very happy to stop there. You guys seem to be looking beyond that.

Dave: That's one of the things that's made this band different. Anytime we've been offered a show, we want to play with out of town bands. I mean, if it's a show in your own backyard, local bands are fine, but if we get a chance to play with an out of town band, we do it. Because that's where we want to play, out of town, and the way you do that is make contact with bands from other towns.

Ralph: What you're talking about has always been kind of a problem.

Dave: I'm not going to name any names, but there are certain bands but they know who they are, and they always play together, and they play every week. And it's cool, but you can't really grow a band that's always playing in front of the same crowd. On the other hand, there's Deadguy. They went straight out the poop chute. They got their act together and they were gone. Or Nudewirl. They had a certain level of success nationally as well. There are bands that do get shows and have a certain popularity, but they don't take it to the next level - which is just having someone stay home one or two nights a week and just make phone calls. That's all it is.

Ralph: Plus, we send a lot of stuff out ourselves.

Dave: But that's all it is. Making the phone calls, sending stuff out...

Q: This year, you went down to the WE Festival, which is all about this Do It Yourself idea. What did you think of the experience?

Dave: I loved it. And really, it was just Kenyata and three or four other people saying, hey, I want to play out of town myself. How can I do it on a big scale? And not take any major label money. Just do it out of our own pockets and make it real grassroots. That's all it was. But they made it happen.

Q: Really, you could do WE Fest in any town with a good core scene. But it doesn't happen because the right people aren't there to make it happen.

Dave: Exactly. Like in New Brunswick we have the Court Tavern, but that's just a bar where they let bands play. I've booked shows there and that's all it really is. It's a shame. And the flip side of that is a scene like D.C., where it's so established and so strong that it's hard for new bands to get in there and play.

Q: Well, that's almost like the Court. If you're not part of that clique, you have a hard time getting shows there and getting any kind of a draw.

Ralph: We're not in that clique. We have a hard draw there. And we have trouble getting shows in town.



Dave: We've been getting better shows, but there's definitely a geared crowd there. There's your punk crowd, your college-kid crowd. And it's just like, you're friends with these 50 people and that's your crowd. But I guess every scene is like that.

Q: Okay, so people are going to be reading this in late July... What will the Aviso' Hara headlines be that month?

Dave: Our new 7 inch EP on Vital Cog Records called "Mature And Unsatisfied" will be out by then. And then for the rest of the summer, maybe one little tour. We really don't have any money right now so we can't get away for too long. We'd love to come back down to North Carolina and play Winston-Salem and Wilmington again.

✓ **For Aviso' Hara show and merchandise information, email the band at durbano@eclipse.net, or write Aviso' Hara, c/o ThumbBox, PO Box 154, New Brunswick NJ 08903.**

Interview by Jim Testa
Photos by Shawn Scallen

When the news arrived that the four members of Swiz were reforming under the new name Sweetbelly Freakdown, I was immediately intrigued. Swiz - along with bands like Soulside, Desiderata, and Jawbox - had been part of a movement that I found very exciting, since their goal was to extend the definition of D.C. hardcore beyond the model set by icons like Minor Threat and Dag Nasty. Bands like Swiz and Soulside not only forged a unique sound but brought to the stage forceful personalities, something that seems to be lacking in much of today's hardcore. With a little prodding from Tim Owen of Jade Tree Records, I set up an interview with the band at CBGB, only to discover that the show wasn't going to happen. So we did the interview by email instead, with bassist Dave Hart answering most of the questions. For the record, Dave and guitarist Jason Farrell also play in the band Bluetip.

Sweetbelly Freakdown:
Shawn Brown - vocals
Jason Farrell - guitar
Dave Hart - bass
Alex Daniels - drums

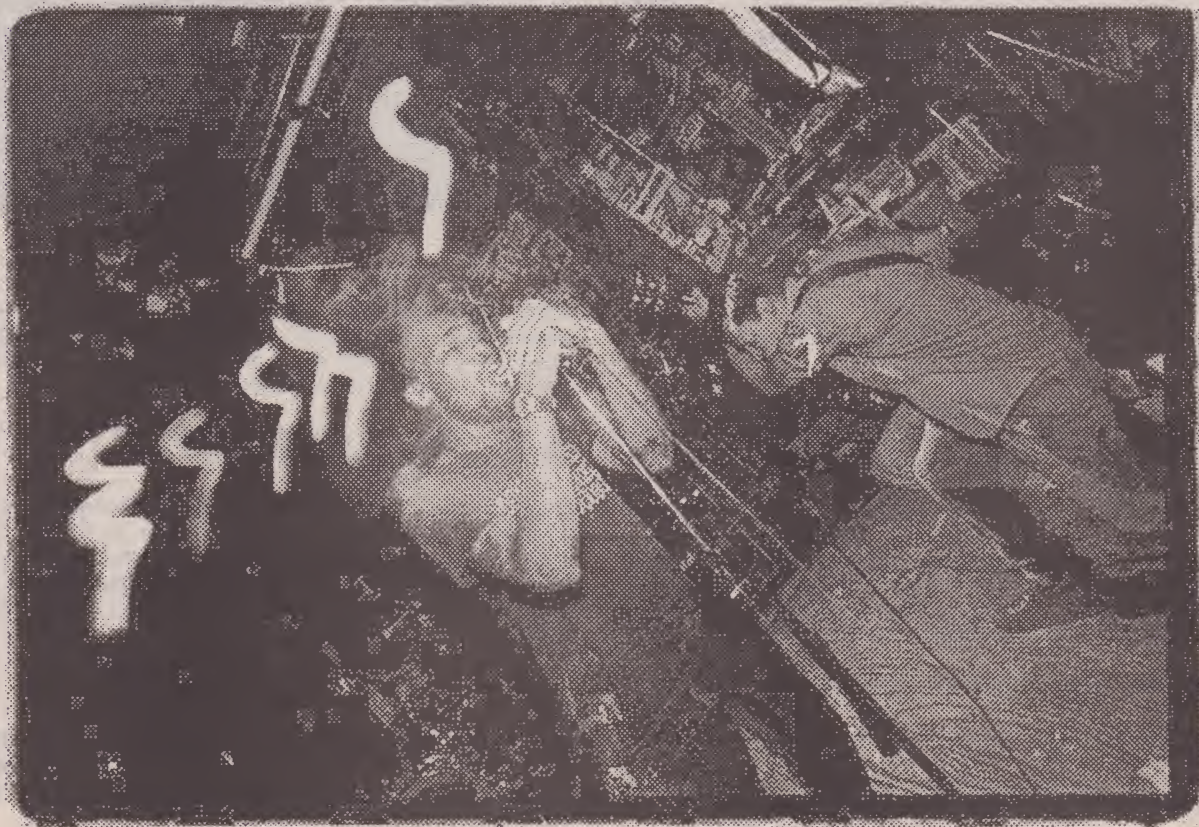
Q: The obvious first question is what motivated the four of you to get back together? Was there ever any thought of reuniting as Swiz or did you know that you would use a new name from the start?

Dave: Well, we are all such good friends, playing music together just becomes a good excuse to hang with each other. I guess 6 years ago when we called it quits, we talked about starting a new band, but that soon fizzled and everyone kinda started doing their own stuff. I decided to move out to California for film, Jason dove into a world of graphic design and film, Shawn went to build bikes and experimented in self preservation through alternative modes of living, and Alex started writing in the political field and joined the band Severin. During our talks, we decided to never do some lame ass reunion tour that would include selling memorabilia from another punk era. About the name Sweetbelly Freakdown, its origin is included on the record. Seek and ye shall find.

Q: It goes without saying that the punk scene has changed enormously since you started playing in bands ten years ago. What have been some of the most obvious changes you've seen in terms of both your audience and working as a band?

Dave: I'm not sure where to start with this one. I wish we could have done this in person, so everyone could have been a part. My moral high horse is just itching to walk all over this, maybe trouble won't hit

Sweetbelly Freakdown





Dave Hart

me back... Between all the Bluetip and the Sweetbelly stuff, I think we have seen a large cross section of the punk audiences. This fall, Bluetip and Kerosene 454 are touring Europe for the first time so I can't comment on that audience, yet. I don't know how much has actually changed, or maybe I'm noticing it more now that I'm a little more removed from hardcore. Sweetbelly played the Syracuse Fest in June. While we were playing, I realized we were just a backdrop to the cannibalistic 100% Cotton (t-shirt) sales and the vegan straight edge literature. I guess what I'm saying is that hardcore, which makes up a great section of the punk genre, seems more like a sedated industry controlled by a group of high school Young Republicans. Here's an example, I met a kid at that show who was selling balpoint pens with the words XSTRAIGHT EDGE printed on them. He held a sign saying "Straight edge pens - \$1.00". He said it was a novelty item. Along with the x-edge tattoos that every kid is covering themselves with, I guess I don't get it. There's always going to be a taller kid with more space to cover that will outdo you. I've always thought if you truly feel what you believe in, there will be no need to wear it like some trophy. People will see what you're all about. The problem here is that hardcore / punkrock / whatever, which I feel used to be this artistic movement that grew out of some sort of rebellious "do shit however the fuck you want to," has turned into a conformist, tired slab of bullshit. If you were at the Syracuse Fest and bought one of those pens, consider yourself a sucker for the hardcore industry.

Q: Are there things you do differently now, in the way you present yourself, prepare for shows, etc. than when you were younger?

Dave: I don't think I do much different. Maybe now I care more about the sound of my guitar or bass. I stretch sometimes.

Q: There hasn't been as much attention paid to the D.C. scene recently as in past years so I wanted to ask you if that had changed much? I remember years ago, it was next to impossible for a punk or hardcore band to get any kind of decent show if they weren't part of what I'll call the Dischord/Positive Force clique. Has that changed to any degree? The other thing about DC is that the more established bands used to make a point of helping younger bands - I remember the Swiz, Soulside, American Standard tour you did, for

instance, which really helped American Standard establish themselves as a band. Does that sort of thing still go on as much? Who are some of the young and up-and-coming DC bands that we should look for, or that you have tried to help?

Dave: You are right, not much attention has been to DC recently. I always thought the scene here came in waves. Right now from my view, I think the scene here is real strong. There's a ton of new bands putting out records and touring. To name a few: The Most Secret Method, the Stigmatics, the Boom, the Sorts, Regulator Watts, All Scars, a new band still nameless formed from the ashes of Jawbox. Anything on the new Dischord label, which is called

'The problem here is that hardcore / punkrock / whatever, which I feel used to be this artistic movement that grew out of some sort of rebellious "do shit however the fuck you want to," has turned into a conformist, tired slab of bullshit.'

Slowdime Records, is bound to kick butt. Also DeSoto Records and Torque Records. Kerosene 454 and Blue Tip are also putting out new records by spring of 98'. As for what has changed in DC, it's changing all the time, I can't really pinpoint what is changing and that's why I like it. The scene here is a little unpredictable, and some people don't have the patience to follow it, so they get lost and give up, and that's fine. We are all alive and kicking here and are planning a tour to a town near you soon. The Dischord / Positive Force clique - some say it's a myth, others say it's a curse, I don't really know. We've got a small town here with a big name, some people get shows and others don't. Most of the punk scenes I've seen in America I think work on a similar basis. and yes, I still think the more established bands help the younger bands. The American Standard example, I always thought they kicked ass, I never thought they needed our help. But as a matter of fact we (Blue Tip) are playing with them in August somewhere in NJ, I think.

Q: This question is for Shawn and it may be a touchy subject, but it's something I always wanted to ask. I was at a show in DC about six years ago and was talking to a group of people, including one black guy. Some kid came up to him and asked him if he was Shawn Brown. The guy smiled and said no, and then he looked at us seriously and said, "You wouldn't believe how often that happens. Any black kid who goes to a show in DC always gets asked if he's Shawn Brown." As one of the few African Americans who has had a big impact on hardcore and punk, have you ever felt the need to be a role model? Do you think people have treated you differently or judged you by different standards? And how about yourself? What has it been like being one of the very few black kids in an overwhelmingly white culture?

Shawn: Well, Jim, race is a touchy subject (not with me!). Seems America fears the race issue. I am not afraid, so here goes! According to our government, we all get along, churches burn but we are okay with each other, right? Politically, economically, and socially this is not the case across the board, they want us to think that it is, but it's a lie. Popular thought seems to say that changes of the last 35 years or so are enough. Giving minorities the right to piss in the same restroom as whites does not bring economic and political power, education does and that is always the first to be cut. The media still sells stereotypes, but it is true...the handsome white male, the dangerous black male...etc. Why am I followed around and watched in stores?! Is it because of cops or NYPD Blue? (probably both). The Tupac and Biggie fiasco gets big press yet KRS-1 (thank god he's out there! much love!) gets snippets! Why? Chaos and fear sell! Racism is a marketing tool for fear. There are forces working to change this but they are suppressed. In our culture, race mixers especially are killed. It's our history. Our economy and country are built on this. To be a minority in America and survive, you must see and believe this as the truth or the double speak will drive you insane.

What is it like being a black man in an overwhelmingly white culture/music scene? It's wild, man! First, I never thought I made a big impact, but I guess I have in some way or the question wouldn't be posed to me. Playing "punk" has never seemed strange to me. It's a cousin of rock 'n roll, which is a cousin of blues, which is the child of slave songs... seems natural and easy to me. Like I said, it's part of the American experience. I never thought this music was solely white. The Bad Brains were the first fucking punk/hardcore band I heard! I mean fuck!!! Yeah, there are problems in the punk/hardcore scene, we could talk about the white power bullshit of the late Eighties or seeming lip service given through the "fuck racism" t-shirts and stickers; not that this is a bad thing, but do these people have any ethnic friends or is it that they are trying to identify with their own social clique? I mean, this is America, don't all black men look alike!? I just keep on keepin' on. My time here is short. I ain't be slowed down from what I have to do... Fuckin' rock... due to the marketing of fear this question has been asked so much of me lately that hopefully I will be able to sit down and really write a short essay about this subject because I have a

lot more to say! Damn limited time and space. Thank you for asking intelligent and worthwhile questions.

Q: Since there are so many younger fans in the scene these days, a lot of them have probably never heard of Swiz, Fury, Dag Nasty or the other bands you've been involved with. How would you characterize Sweetbelly Freakdown as what would you say is unique about what you're doing now, as opposed to music you've made in the past?

Dave: Shawn managed to skip out before I could have him answer this question, so I can't completely speak for the Dag Nasty or Fury side (I was around but not directly involved). What's unique, I think, is that we are generally more relaxed about the whole process of playing in a band together. I think we have less limitations than ever before. We are writing more as a unit than in the past. We have a label (Jade Tree Records) that is very much on our side and interested in documenting our music in a fashion that we approve. The difference in the two bands is really not very much and that's what is so unique. I believe Sweetbelly Freakdown has picked up just where Swiz had left off.

Jason Farrell



Lunachicks

'I used to get called Madonna on the street — Madonna, Cyndi Lauper or Boy George. Now I'd probably get Gwen (No Doubt) or whatever else. Back then I used to hang out with people that knew Madonna before she was big and I took an aerobics class once and she was in it. She was doing everything so good! And I was in the back of the class like dying. I was fourteen and probably smoking and been up all night and whatever...'



Interview and photo by Eva Silverman

When I think of the Lunachicks, I think of punk rock glitter. In their cute stage outfits complete with tutu, glitter and fake hair, the Lunachicks pound out a presence so real, so immense that it is impossible to contain. If you have ever seen them in action, you know how they are: bopping around the stage like little girls playing dress up. Yes, these women know how to play their instruments and know how to "fuck shit up" as well. Theo, Squid, Cyndi, Gina and Chip - the sparkling punk action team known as the Lunachicks. Before their show as part of the Go Kart Vs. The Corporate Giant concert, a benefit for Hale House, I was lucky enough to talk with Theo, singer of the Lunachicks.

Q: What is your favorite food?

Theo: Chocolate.

Q: What are the inspirations for your songs?

Theo: Kids, weirdos, food... anything, ya know?

Q: What is the craziest/strangest thing you've done at a show?

Theo: This is pretty disgusting. Well, we were playing this show and there were all these little boys in the front row shouting "Show us your tits, show us your tits!" They wouldn't stop! So after a while I said, "You wanna see something?." So I got really fed up and ... it was the first day that I was on my period so I pulled out this really bloody tampon and flung it into the audience. I remember looking after the show for it on the ground and it wasn't there. So somebody actually took it home!!..

Q: How would you define your sound?

Theo: I guess you could say some sort of punk. Hard rock, I think we have a kind of metalish sound, maybe. I think some people kind of associate it with riot grrrl, but I don't know if I see that. How would you describe it?

Q: Well, I guess girl punk rock. Joan Jett-ish, the Gits. Lots of fun and glittered punk. Yr latest album sounds a little more poppy and together than the rest. Yeah, punk rock. How do you feel about Madonna?

Theo: When I was... I guess when I was in high school, I don't know exactly what year it was she got big. But I used to get called on the street, Madonna, Cyndi Lauper or Boy George. Now I'd probably get Gwen or whatever else. Back then I used to hang out with those people that knew her before she was big and I took an aerobics class once and she was in it. She was doing everything so good! And I was in the back of the class like dying. I was fourteen and probably smoking and been up all night and whatever, which I don't smoke anymore but... So I didn't really used to like her but I think that... I have very mixed feelings about her, but I think she is a really awesome, talented, powerful woman. People are afraid of her and people talk shit about her because she is that way. Maybe she is a bitch, I don't really know, but I think it's really cool that this solo

artist woman can be so big and so rich. I think its really cool that she hasn't put her baby in the spotlight too. Unlike Pamela Lee that's like, "MY BABY!!," even though I like her too.

Q: Where is your favorite place to play?

Theo: My favorite place to play is Japan, and California in LA and San Francisco. New York is always fun too.

Q: Where do you see yourself in ten years?

Theo: Either successfully living off this, somehow. Or something else, I don't know what!

Q: What do you feel is different about your latest CD *Pretty Ugly* than the others?

Theo: I think that this production is better, I think the songs are more focused. I really liked *Jerk of All Trades*, too, but for me, those two albums are the only ones I like listening to. Our earlier albums, I've probably listened to them once or twice when they came out and if I have to learn songs again that I forgot, then I listen to them. I think everyone has gotten so much better, my singing and everyone's playing and production.

Q: When you first started playing together, who were your influences?

Theo: Well, they are pretty much the same now as they are then. We were all really into the Ramones, the Buzzcocks, X-Ray-Spex, the Rezillos and Blondie, Dead Boys, NY Dolls. And then there is Alice Cooper, Iggy, Black Sabbath, and Judas Priest. There is so much. Then there is David Bowie, who is my idol from his Ziggy days. Everyone in the band has different types of music that they like more. Cyndi and Squid like more punk and pop punk. Me and Gina... Gina likes more progressive stuff like Mule and Jesus Lizard, we all do. We all like the Melvins. I am more on the metal side, but I like everything. Gina and Chip pretty much like everything too.

Q: Do you feel connected with the whole Riot Grrrl movement?

Theo: The only way I feel connected is that people lump us in. We're not a riot grrrl band, but I think that the movement is great and the meetings are great and anything to empower women is great by me. But again, getting lumped into something that you are not involved with is irritating. That's pretty much it, but I say, "GO GIRLS!"

Q: Who is your favorite cartoon character?

Theo: Ren and Stimpy. Can I say two?!!

Q: What is the deal with the KROCK vs. Lunachick battle?

Theo: There was this whole thing where, a year and a half ago when we were playing with Marilyn Manson, Greg (the owner of Go-Kart Records, the label that the Lunachicks are on) had gone to Q104.3 when it was an alternative station and he said, "why don't you play the Lunachicks?" and they said, "We don't play female bands," so we said "Fuck that station!" So they were supporting the Marilyn Manson tour so they had these big signs, so I held it up to say "Pure Cock Rock," Now somehow this turned into that this was about KROCK, but then KROCK was not an alternative station. So, it turned into this whole rumor that we were dissing KROCK. On top of it, when we played out record release show and I was telling everyone to call KROCK to play our song, it also turned into, "she was dissing KROCK." Its just really stupid. Then the other day at one of the No Doubt shows, Booker (a KROCK deejay) was there. Me and Greg went over to him and started explaining all this, then

the next day on the radio he started going off and people called in. This one guy was like, "that fat dyke bitch said shit about KROCK at Marilyn Manson, I was there it was 97." It was 96 it was about Q104.3, that guy was a fucking idiot. So it turned into this whole thing. Then I called up and told the whole story that I just told you, then the next day, it just went on and on and on. So now, Booker is supposed to show up and I'm supposed to arm wrestle him, but I think he's scared. Which is unfortunate, but it got to the point where I called up and they'd be like, "Oh sexy momma I had a dream about you." And stuff like that so I'm like go ahead, whatever you want, just play our fuckin' song.

Q: What bands have you played with in the past?

Theo: Luscious Jackson, the Offspring, Rancid, the Muffs, NoFX, Marilyn Manson, Reverend Horton Heat, Swinging Utters, and we just went out with No Doubt. Which are the biggest shows we have ever played so it's really awesome, and Weezer is on that. And we just got back from Europe with the Offspring too.

Q: Are you doing a tour after this?

Theo: We just toured the US by ourselves for the first time in two years and after this we are home for a little while. Then we are doing this big womyn's festival in Detroit and then some other Mid West shows and then we'll go back to Europe. Busy.

Q: Is touring really crazy and hectic?

Theo: It is but you get really use to it. Its almost easier to stay out for a long time then to come home for a week and then go back. Id almost rather be home for a day or two then be home for a week, cuz then you are sort of, "Now I'm home!"



Theo and our intrepid reporter, Eva



CROCODILE SHOP

Has the Age of Electronica arrived? With Orbital, The Orb, and the Prodigy sharing the headline spot on this summer's Lollapalooza tour, & the major labels gobbling up Electronica the way they rushed to sign any long-haired boho in a flannel shirt after Nevermind, it certainly seems like we are at the Dawn of, if not a new Age, at least a new 15-minute Trend. And who better to explain this Brave New World of guitarless anti-pop music than our own Mick Hale, Jersey Beat's Danse Assembly columnist and one-third of Crocodile Shop, one of the Garden State's most cutting edge techno units. So this issue's Danse Assembly column will be a little different. Instead of Mick reviewing a slew of techno and industrial releases, he is responding to questions I posed about the current state of electronic music and his own band.

A little background: Over a dozen years ago, Mick - then known as Mick London - and high school chums Bob Strete and Chris Collins formed one of NJ's most popular 60's garage-rock bands, Mod Fun. By the late Eighties, Mod Fun had dropped its most blatant Sixtiesisms for a modern "pop" sound more influenced by Big Star than the Jam. After a European tour, Collins left the group and Mod Fun was reborn as the moody, gothic-y Crocodile Shop, with Lord John's Jon Figler on drums. Over the next several years, through several lineup changes, the band evolved its electronic industrial sound, acquiring V. Markus on keyboards and, most recently, Len Goins on electronic drums.

In addition to Crocodile Shop, Mick has composed and released several solo albums, as well as a number of underground film soundtracks. He also publishes Danse Assembly, a fanzine devoted to industrial/techno music, which serves as a propaganda tool for his musical projects. Crocodile Shop's latest album, Pain, was released in June on Metropolis Records. - Jim Testa

CROCODILE SHOP ::

Mick Hale- vox, programming

vMarkus- keys, programming

Len Goins- Live electronic drums

Q: What has your reaction been to the recent press hype about electronic music becoming 'the next big thing'?

(M) It's about time the mainstream media, & in turn the money-hungry types at Major labels got wind of something new, fresh & modern. Not that primitive regressive rockNroll crap they've been peddling since the 50's,... Thank God!"

Q: Do you think electronic music can cross over and gain mainstream acceptance?

(M) "Yes - the masses of young teenagers are like sheep who have



Photos by Andy Peters

been willing to let MTV tell them what to listen to & like for YEARS now. How else can you explain crap like Hootie, Alanis & that 'grunge' crap becoming so 'big'?"

Q: How do you feel about the wealth of electronic music on this year's Lollapalooza tour?

(M) "Is there really? - I know I enjoyed seeing Front 242 on there a few years back, what's this year? Smashing Pumpkins playing around with MIDI?"

Q: What is your opinion of the word "electronica" to describe this genre?

(M) "It's a fair enough blanket term for all kinds of electronic-orientated music, (ie: Electro, Industrial, Techno, House, Gabber, etc...) They're all just catch phrases, & I have never shied away from describing any of the music I've made, unlike a lot of people in the genre who have to constantly "confuse" the issue with made-up things like "Oh we're not industrial, we're like Electro-Road-Kill for Rivetheads"... It's electro-Industrial as far as I'm concerned! But the one thing that REALLY gets under my skin is all the promo-types who try & push Rock/w/ metal gee-tars off as Indus-

trial just because there's a sequencer bubbling away so far in the background that it's probably something that didn't get erased off the bulk tape anyway!"

Q: What can rock fans expect that will be different when they see their first electronic band?

(M) "Usually it's the absence of "traditional" drum kits or, in the best cases, guitars & Marshall stacks..."

Q: What is unique about what Crocodile Shop? what would I take away from a Croc Shop show or recording that I wouldn't get from another band's work?

(M) "We try & put on a spectacle, we don't approach the stage as just another music act, we've got all sorts of lighting & video imagery to put on a multifaceted experience

Q: Do you think this new CD and the deal with Metropolis Records offers you a good chance to move up another rung?

(M) "Yes, it seems to be helping... we've been featured in a number of electro & industrial fanzines lately & Metro is pretty good at setting up a lot of College radio

interviews & such..."

Q: You started out in music (in Mod Fun) essentially trying to recreate the past. Now you're making music that tries to (needs to?) keep at least one foot in the future. Do you see any irony in that?

(M) "Irony? I dunno... I think I was in a way doing 'research.' It's like the concept of "if you don't know your past you don't know your future." In the sixties & seventies people like Hendrix or Pink Floyd were always using new (modern) equipment & technology (of the time) to 'update' their sounds, & to stop at the advances they made can get quite limiting; it's Fun, but not Mod, y'know? Like on the new album I think there's more than a few Bowie references on there, which is something I was obviously always into... & Croc Shop is still doing 'songs' within an electro framework, there's a verse, AND a chorus... unlike a lot of other electronicA that is just loops & samples; we've got them too, but if you're looking for a 'song' in there, we give you a hook to find it with!"

Crocodile Shop can be reached at damnet@aol.com or at its web page at <http://users.aol.com/damnet>.

By Jim Testa
Photos by Justin Borucki

H20:

Toby Morse- Vocals
Rusty Pistachio- Guitar
Adam Blake - Bass
Todd Morse - Guitar
Todd Friend - Drums



Most New York hardcore bands struggle for years to gain any measure of popularity, slowing evolving from demo tape to EP to first album to eventually headline status at one of those fabled CBGB hardcore matinees. Not H20. It was like this band was born fully developed and instantly popular, with a huge following and a deal with Epitaph Records to boot. Their first tour was to Europe with Sick Of It All, their first New York show at Roseland opening for Rancid in front of thousands of kids.

It all struck me as downright suspicious, and H20's rallying cry to bring back the good old days of New York City's hardcore scene didn't help. "Old School NY/HC" means different things to different people, of course, but something about the tone of H20's first album struck me the wrong way. "Old School wannabes," I called them, concerned that their 'Back To '84' crusade was just a cheap attempt to sucker gullible young kids with a romanticized vision of Eighties NY/HC. I remember those CBGB hardcore matinees and all the sick, twisted crap that went on - the skinheads and fights, the intimidation and the bloodshed - and the idea of reviving any part of that scene revolted me.

As it turned out, I was being a complete moron.

What I had forgotten in my cynical rush to condemn H20 were all the positive things about that early NY/HC scene. "Unity" in those days was more than a catchphrase. You'd go to a show and feel

like you really belonged to something, like all the other kids at that show were bloodbrothers united in the same beliefs. Yeah, the music was angry and aggressive and the moshpits could be violent; but there was an unwritten rule that if someone fell down, you stopped and picked him up. *That's* the New York Hardcore scene that H20 wants to bring back: Positive. United. A community.

The first time I interviewed H20, the band impressed me with their earnestness and enthusiasm, as well as their credentials. These guys are not your typical 30-year old hardcore veterans who have regrouped for a Nineties payday; four of the five spent the last ten years struggling, working, and living hardcore for very little in the way of material rewards. The band seemed very concerned about the perception that they had been shoved down the throat of the HC scene by their well-connected friends, and but as they told their story, they defended themselves well. It was a heckuva story.

H20

The Jersey Beat Interview

But hey, I told you I was a moron - my tape recorder accidentally erased that entire interview. So I got to visit with H20 again - the second time at the studio where the band was recording its second album - and ask some different questions. And I grew even more convinced that not only was this a great band that shared many of my core beliefs about what punk really stands for, but they were also five of the nicest guys you'd ever want to meet.

Ironically, although H20 has come to epitomize NY/HC, the band members all come from somewhere else. Rusty hails from the Washington DC area, as do the group's heavily tattooed, speed-talking frontman, Toby Morse; his brother, guitarist Todd Morse; and drummer Todd Friend (you might recall the two Todds from their band Outcrowd, which relocated from D.C. to NJ and lasted for ten years.) Bassist Adam Blake is from England.

Most of this interview was conducted with individual band members as the others took turns in the studio working on overdubs and vocals. Then I pasted everything together to give it some continuity. It was during Toby's days as roadie for NY/HC legends Sick Of It All that the H20 story begins...

Q: Let's go over how you all came together again.

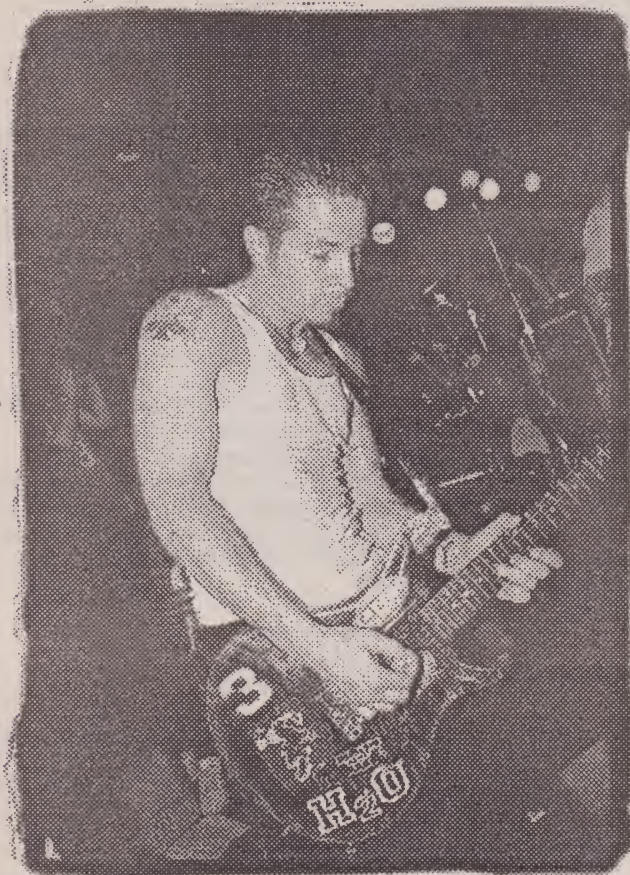
Rusty: Toby was told to get a band together.

Toby: I wasn't really told. I was doing something as a joke (singing a song during SOIA's set each night) and it was getting a really good response, and kind of annoyed the people who were letting me use their stage time to do it. So eventually they started telling me, if you wanna get on stage and sing, you oughta just do it, get your own band together. So I started getting serious and I wrote this song, 'Five Year Plan,' on the plane coming back from Japan. And Rusty had always talked about doing a band. He had moved to New York doing art stuff. So I brought up the idea and he said, 'I'm down, I'll do the music,' and then we got Max who was the old drummer for Sick Of It All, Murphys Law, and Burn, he was our

stand-in drummer, and then I knew Eric from Zero Tolerance from going on tour with them, so I asked him to play bass. And we started jamming and it slowly started to get real. Then we were barely even a band and Sick Of It All asked us to go on tour with them to Europe for eight weeks. At that point we barely even knew each other, and during that tour, we realized that Max's personality didn't really fit in with ours, and Eric was just plain crazy. At that same time, I called him and found out that Outcrowd was having problems and was breaking up. So we got them a copy of the demo and they started learning them, and by the time we got back from Europe, they had all the songs down. So Max left and these guys (Todd and Todd) came in. Then Eric had some problems in his life and he left, and we needed a bass, and Alex was just about to quit Shelter, and as soon as we found out he could play bass, we asked him to join.

Rusty: I knew Adam but we thought he was a guitar player. But I was talking to him one night saying that we needed to find someone to play bass, and he said, 'Oh, I was trained in bass, I went to school to play bass.'

Toby: We were a little afraid at first because his personality was so laid back, and he had been in Shelter and had been a krishna and didn't drink or smoke or anything. But now he's not. One tour with Murphy's Law, hanging out with Jimmy Gestapo and Todd Youth, fixed all that.



Todd Morse

Rusty: Todd Youth showed him the dark side of the force one night in New Orleans.

Toby: Todd Youth and Jimmy Gestapo corrupted him in one night. So now he's not a positive, civilized man anymore like he was in Shelter. But he's himself now. He had to follow so many rules in Shelter and with us, he's free. And he's still a young kid finding himself.

Q: Adam, how did you get into hardcore in England?

Adam: I was a metal kid, really. I knew a little bit about punk music but hardcore in England it's different than here, you can't just go to a show every weekend. You can't just find it everywhere like you can here.

Q: What was the first American hardcore you heard?

Adam: One of my friends bought a bunch of hardcore records and turned me on to it. The reason I got into Gorilla Biscuits, Youth Of Today, and Insted - all the straightedge bands - was because straightedge was the best music to get drunk too. Because it's so positive and bouncy and energetic and all about unity. And of course when you're drunk, you're positive and bouncy and energetic, so that makes straightedge bands the best music to drink to.

Q: Did you eventually figure it out?

Adam: Oh yeah, you'd read the lyrics and you're realize what was going on. But I actually wound up going straightedge because I used to do a lot of nasty things, unhealthy for me. And my personality is that I either do a lot of it, or I don't do it at all. And I just decided that I really had to stop for a while. But now I do a lot of it again. But back then, I was just getting fried. It wasn't leading me anywhere. So straightedge for me was a really positive thing. It was a way to start fresh. It got a lot of bad influences out of my system and got me focused on what I wanted to do with my life and where I wanted to go. But now I'm on the road and things are going pretty well, so I kind of slacked and I'm doing stuff again. I'm resting on my laurels. But I was very young then. I'm 24 now, and I'm been around enough and seen enough to know what's what.

Q: Drinking in England is very different, isn't it?

Adam: Very different. Drinking in England, you can drink at 18. And England is still a pub culture. Here, people tend to find lots of various things to do. In England, it tends to be, you get home from work and you go to the pub. And you tend to go to the same pub every day, your local. It's like Cheers, everybody knows your name. And that's how the English boy/girl thing goes, that's how making friends goes, basically the whole social infrastructure of England is based around pubs. So in England, when you're straightedge, it really does mean you have no friends, like that T-shirt says. It makes things difficult. And because you can drink at 18, it means you drink at 16. It's almost encouraged, really. I was 14 when I started going to pubs. From the age of 14 to 15, I was pretty much bombed all the time.

Q: Do you think the feeling of fellowship that you gave up by not going to pubs is what attracted you to hardcore?

Adam: Definitely. I especially found that out touring the world. You can sit down in Osaka, Japan, and talk about Youth Of Today or Minor Threat, and kids know. You wouldn't believe. Scene gossip. Everything. Especially with the Internet now, you can go everywhere and people know hardcore. Plus the whole nature of the music is an us-against-them thing, everybody together under one ideal, one focus towards creating a better world. And the thing with hardcore is that most kids are really sincere about it. It's not like metal where you like worship Satan and evil, but it's all tongue in

cheek. It's parody, really. But with hardcore, kids take it really seriously. It gives kids a reason to be, almost. They'll do their fanzines or their band or whatever, and they come to shows, and it's a real big deal.

Q: Did being into hardcore make it easier for you when you came over here from England?

Adam: Well, I came over here to join Shelter, and in Shelter, we were an insular little bunch. I didn't really talk to people outside of the little krishna circle. It wasn't until I joined H2O that I really started to make friends. And of course you have automatic bonds. It's funny, in a way it's something that to the outside world seems so trivial - oh, you like this music, and so does he. But there's so much more to it than that, and so much that's intangible that you can't put your finger on. Unfortunately, hardcore right now seems very fragmented to me, more fragmented than I think it used to be. You've got the krishna kids, and the vegans, and the vegan kids don't like the vegetarian kids because they drink milk. And then you've got the straight-edge kids, and beer, and all these different things. And yet, if it came down to it, I think everyone would stand side by side together, which is really important.

Q: (to drummer Todd Friend) Todd, your experiences were quite different. I met you and Todd (Morse) after you moved to NJ with Outcrowd and watched you guys work really hard for a long time, without ever really getting anywhere. Now virtually overnight you're in a band that's signed to a great label, touring all year so you don't need day jobs anymore... What's that been like?



Todd F.: It's been pretty flattering. I never would have expected it. Todd and I have been in H2O for about two years now, and it's been

'One of my friends bought a bunch of (American) hardcore records and turned me on to it. The reason I got into Gorilla Biscuits, Youth Of Today, and Insted - all the straightedge bands - was because straightedge was the best music to get drunk too. Because it's so positive and bouncy and energetic and all about unity. And of course when you're drunk, you're positive and bouncy and energetic, so that makes straightedge bands the best music to drink to.' - Adam

completely different from the last two years in Outcrowd. In Outcrowd, we'd play out maybe once a month. Sometimes we'd get lucky and play six times a month. We just felt happy to be playing shows. Now we'll play like five or six nights a week. I can't even describe how it feels, and it's like everything we ever dreamed about has come true. I've been playing with Todd since I was 14, and now I'm going to be 26 next month, so it's been 12 years. And for 10 of those years, we had nothing to show for it. We made four Outcrowd albums in those ten years, but we've been in H2O for two years and we're making our second H2O album in a year and a half. That's definitely something pretty special.

Q: Since you weren't the original drummer, how have you seen H2O change since you came aboard?

Todd F.: It's definitely more together. More focused. And I hope we've expanded our sound with this new stuff. I think we have developed in a way to where everyone in the band likes what we're doing. Everyone is into it and everyone is giving 100%, and that's about all you can ask for.

Q: The first time I saw the band, before you were in it, I didn't really like it. I thought it was just two-parts Sick Of It All, one-part Youth Of Today - NYHC by-the-numbers. Now the music seems to have really expanded. For instance, I hear a lot of D.C. influence in the two songs you were recording today.

Rusty: I don't want to say anything bad about anybody else, but a lot of the changes you're hearing are because Todd is a much better drummer than our old drummer. Not that I want to say anything bad about Max Capshaw. In fact, one of the songs he wrote when he was still in H2O is going to be on this record.

Toby: We noticed the difference when we did the European tour with Max and then came him and these two guys (Todd and Todd) jumped in.

Rusty: They had to re-learn how to play with us, because we played so basic and straightforward, and these guys in Outcrowd were trying all kinds of crazy beats and timing things. They had to go back to Rock School and learn how to play hardcore with us.

Q: Toby, you're the lynchpin of this band, the reason it all started. How did you get into hardcore in the first place?

Toby: I got into hardcore because my mom was so busy raising me and my brother and my other brother, my one brother would sneak

me out of the house to go see Dead Kennedys and stuff. And I just totally got into it. I was pretty much raised on hardcore and punk rock. Even when my brothers got into other rock and roll stuff, I stayed hardcore and punk rock. When we first moved here, it was awesome. And then later when it got really violent, I think that's what ruined it. And we're trying to bring back the aspects of when we were younger and growing up, you could go to shows and be yourself, having fun, get dressed the way you wanna dress, dance the way you wanna dance, smile if you want. Feel as one with the crowd and the band. And now I think the scene lacks that. I think kids are so scared about what to wear to the shows and how they should dance and how they should look... And god forbid they should ever smile! And hardcore's about being yourself, going to hear this music that you usually can't hear it on the radio, because it's so aggressive and so much reality that you can't find it in the real world.

Rusty: The music is so fast that most people aren't tuned in to hearing beats that fast and lyrics that fast. So they don't get it.

Toby: We're just trying to bring back the fun of it, when you used to be excited for the show coming up next Sunday. You couldn't wait, that's all you could think about all week, because you knew it was going to be fun and it was going to be exciting, and you knew you weren't going to get beat up. That's what we're trying to bring back. And it's working. At our shows, there's no fights. We just played a big New York show and there was no fights.

Todd Morse: That was a great show because it had such a great vibe. I love watching all the bands get responses. I hate going to shows when people are standing around like sticks during the opening bands waiting for the big band to play. That was such a good feeling during our show. I stuck my head out to look and everytime, no matter what band or what song was playing, people were into it. That felt so good to see that.

Q: I really think that trickles down from the top. You guys have that attitude and so the kids who come to see you have that attitude. If they see you watching the opening bands and having a good time and getting into it, they're gonna be into it too. But if you're all outside standing on the sidewalk and ignoring the opening bands, which a lot of bands do, then the kids will be out there too.

Todd M: We're always checking out the bands we play with.

Todd F: And the bands we play with on tour, they'll watch us. And vice versa.

Todd M: On the other hand, if you're on a long tour, you get jaded because you're seeing so many bands. But you know what? That brings it to a level where you get better at spotting the bands that are really good. Because they're the ones that break through your jaded shell. All of a sudden, you're like, wow, who are these guys? And it usually has less to do with their musical ability and more to do with their presence and their energy, and how they are as people. If they do something even slightly unique or different, that's when they get my interest.

Q: I think that's an important point. Personality used to be a very important part of hardcore - you had Jello Biafra and Rollins and Ray Cappo and Milo and all these guys with amazing stage presence and really strong personalities on stage. And now it seems like so many bands just shuffle on stage and look and sound and act like every other band.

Toby: It got stale.

Rusty: I always think it's cool when someone says we have personality. I think that's important. We're there to entertain people. That's our job.

Q: Another big part of this whole thing is bands who start going well helping younger bands. You guys were recipients of that, and now I see you're doing it yourselves.



H2O working hard in the studio. Photo by Jim Testa

Rusty: Definitely. We have to give a big shoutout to the Bosstones. They teach you how to be band. They've got a lot of popularity and yet they treat everyone with respect and they're always ready to help bands out.

Toby: Rancid too. We opened for them at Roseland for a crowd that had never even heard of us, and ever since that show, we have had so many more fans. I hear so often, oh, I saw you open for Rancid. Even little kids, kids who had never heard of punk rock or hardcore, they're all into Rancid and by letting us open up for them, we got this huge crowd of these young MTV kids. And those kids are great, because those kids are more open minded than a lot of the people in the hardcore scene. Even the Bosstones fans, a lot of people might say they're just jocks or whatever, but at least they're open minded. They'll watch you and they'll give you a chance. A lot of kids in the hardcore scene, they're like, "oh, he's wearing leather shoes..." (makes a face) You know what I mean. They're so quick to judge without giving you a chance."

Todd M: We are definitely into the bootstrap mentality of getting pulled up and then pulling up the people behind you. If there's any-

thing that I personally get out of being in this band right now, one of the most satisfying things after being in Outcrowd for 10 years, is to be able to actually help another band. To get them a show or whatever.

Rusty: Yeah, we see a band and we go, wow, we like that band. And we can help get them a show. We know enough people in the business and promoters that we can give them a tape of a band and they'll listen. And even if they come back and say, you know, I really didn't like that band, and we'll go, But do you get it? We have the opportunity to say, Do you get it? And walk them through the tape if that's what it takes, and make sure they understand where that band is coming from.

Q: Okay, let's name names: Who are some of the bands people are going to be reading about in Jersey Beat a few years from now?

ALL: Sweet 16. Fahrenheit 451. Ensign. Nine Lives. Fur. Pietasters. Powerhouse from California.

Todd M.: This has been so great for me, because it's such a totally different feeling than when I was doing Outcrowd. When I was in Outcrowd, I was a different person, I was a hermit. I didn't socialize much. I would just stay home and work on my music and let my music speak for me. I got too artsy fartsy and I forgot about my hardcore roots. And to have it all come back around, and with people that I was friends of mine, so close to me already, that now I feel like a normal person again.

Rusty: Todd and I were in a band ten, 12 years ago. Before Outcrowd. And I've always wanted to be in a band with him again since then, because when we'd write songs together it just worked so good. And now this is that time.

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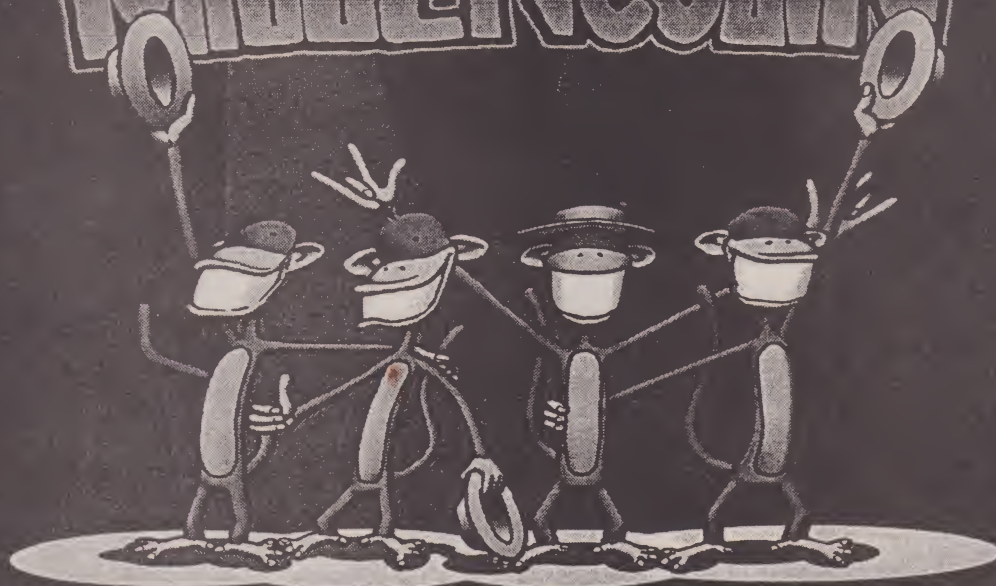
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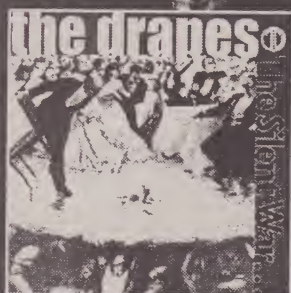


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By Jim Testa

Maureen "Moe" Tucker, drummer of the legendarily decadent Velvet Underground, wasn't home when I phoned for our interview. She had forgotten that I would be calling, her daughter said apologetically, and had run to K-Mart to pick up a few things.

We connected about an hour later and I finally had the pleasure of chatting with one of the most influential drummers of one of the most important bands in the history of rock 'n' roll. Not that you'd know it from anything in Moe Tucker's demeanor. She's as down-to-earth and unpretentious as could be - perhaps not what you'd expect from the drummer on "Heroin" and "White Light/White Heat," but certainly in keeping with the woman who left the Velvets in 1972 to marry and raise five children in the small suburban community of Douglas, GA.

Tucker returned to music in 1981, sporadically recording LP's for small indie labels, but usually contributing vocals and guitar. The only meaningful time she's been back behind her drum kit in the last 25 years was for the Velvets short-lived reunion tour and subsequent live album (*Live MCMXCIII*) in 1993. Until now.

Don't Be A Penguin, the debut album of the D.C.-based pop group Magnet, marks Tucker's return to studio drumming - and touring. Her association with Magnet began when the group's leader - singer, songwriter, and guitarist Mark Goodman - sent her some demos back in 1990. While she liked the music, Tucker was busy at that point with a solo tour, and shortly thereafter, became involved with putting together the Velvet Underground reunion. When she and Goodman renewed their acquaintance recently, Tucker agreed to record and tour to help promote Magnet's first album.

Don't Be A Penguin features 13 songs written by Goodman, a spoken-word track delivered by Tucker, and a cover of a song by a young DC band, Anne Summers. The feel is often similar to the Velvet Underground's quieter tunes like "There She Goes Again" and "Pale Blue Eyes," and Goodman's raspy phrasing and chickenscratch guitar owe a good deal to Velvets' frontman Lou Reed. Add Tucker's trademark thump-thump drumming and the similarities become impossible to ignore.

But Velvets-influenced bands are a dime a dozen - from Dream Syndicate to Eleventh Dream Day to Luna - and Magnet is the only one to convince Moe Tucker herself to pick up her drumsticks and return to the fray. So naturally, we had to ask why...

Q: What inspired you to get back into the ratrace and join a band like Magnet that's recording for a very small label and touring very small clubs at this stage of your life?

Moe: Well, I'm not really back in a band. I'm doing these tours with them just to help them get a little attention. My own thing is still uppermost. And if they want to tour and I can't do it at a later date, then they'll just have someone else play drums. So I'm not technically in the band.

Q: But what attracted you to the project? Why help out this band and not any of the other hundreds of bands that would love to have you as their drummer for a while? Did you just like the songs?

Moe: Actually, I didn't hear any of the songs before we got into the studio. The songs for this record are all new. None of us heard them until we got into the studio. I just like Mark (Goodman) and I was impressed by the fact that he was... well, this sounds ridiculous, but he's very organized. I knew that this wasn't going to be a time waster. Mark organizes

What Becomes A Legend Most?

For the Velvet Underground's Moe Tucker, it's getting back behind the drums to help out an up'n'coming band



When I listen to music, that's all I do - I never put music on just for background, and I never did. So when I listen to an album, I know that it's going to turn into an hour, and I usually wind up saying, well, I can't do that now, I have to do such-and-such. And that is a big part of why I don't listen to much. It just seems like it's going to turn into too much time...



and plans ahead, and I knew that if we did something together, it would mean something. It wouldn't just be dropped. Sometimes someone will ask you to do something and you'll realize that it's just a fly by night thing and you're just wasting your time.

Q: So it sounds like this record was actually written by all of you in the studio as you recorded it?

Moe: Pretty much. We got there and he taught the chords to the guitar guys and we just blasted off.

Q: Mark makes no bones about the fact that his songwriting is very influenced by the Velvet Underground. Did the fact that the material sounds quite a bit like what you had done in the past make the whole project a little more attractive to you?

Moe: Possibly. I never thought of that, but maybe. I'll tell you, I was very pleasantly surprised by the whole thing. I really, really liked a lot, and do like, a lot of the stuff. I really like Mark's songwriting. I think the lyrics are excellent and his chord progressions are a little more interesting than usual. I'm very happy with that record and I really think it's quite good.

Q: Between your own solo projects and the reunion with the Velvets, I know you've been actively working in music off and on for the past 15 years, but I was wondering if you actually liked the process of touring? Or is that just a necessary evil if you want to keep making records?

Moe: I like to tour, I enjoy playing live.

Q: Everyone likes playing live, but touring and playing are two different things. Touring means driving all day to get to the next town and sleeping in a strange bed every night...

Moe: Well, of course, a large part of it is a very large pain in the ass.

Q: I see from the itinerary of the Magnet tour that you're playing very small clubs.

Moe: I'd rather play a small club and sell it out than play a big place and see it half-empty.

Q: Speaking of small clubs, let's talk about Maxwell's for a moment. I saw you the last time you played there and I can't remember what year it was. But I remember you were touring with Half Japanese and playing with those young people from the Velvet Underground Appreciation Society. I think it was 1989 or '90.

Moe: That was long ago. In fact, I think it was even longer ago than that, because the first tour I did on my own without those people was Europe in 1989. So the tour you're talking about was probably 1987 or '88.

Q: What I remember most from that show, and this is going to sound very corny, but as you were playing, I became very aware of this actual, palpable feeling of love in that room - that everybody there watching you shared this enormous affection for you and what you had meant to them.

Moe: Well, thank you, that's very nice.

Q: I would think you get a lot of that, though. Are you constantly running into people who talk about how you've changed their lives?

Moe: Yes, I do. And a lot of people write to me and say that. It's very gratifying.

Q: How about the enormous number of bands who have been influenced by the Velvet Underground? Do you try and keep up with pop music and new bands, and if so, do you hear the VU influence in many of them?

Moe: No, not really. You can't hear anything new, especially down here (in Georgia,) unless it's on the radio. And if it's on the radio, it's really not worth listening to. So I really don't get to hear a hell of a lot. And I certainly don't watch MTV.

Q: How about some of the bands who are very specifically described as being Velvet Underground-influenced. I'm especially thinking of a band from here, Yo La Tengo. Their drummer, Georgia, is always being compared to you.

Moe: I'm sure she loves that.

Q: So do you know them? Do you listen to their records?

Moe: I know who they are. No, I don't have their records.

Q: You're still writing and recording so it seems odd that you keep yourself so out of touch with what's going on in music. Is that because you want to keep a fresh perspective and not be influenced by anything else, or is it just a matter of priorities?

Moe: That's what it comes down to, I just don't seem to have time for it. When I listen to music, that's all I do - I never put music on just for background, and I never did. So when I listen to an album, I know that it's going to turn into an hour, and I usually wind up saying, well, I can't do that now, I have to do such-and-such. And that is a big part of why I don't listen to much. It just seems like it's going to turn into too much time.

Q: You still have kids at home too, right? How old is the youngest now?

Moe: 16.

Q: Well, that's a full-time job right there.

Moe: Exactly.

Q: Are any of your kids in bands?

Moe: No. The 16-year old took up guitar about a year and a half ago, and so far, that's what he wants to do, be a musician. But nobody else. I have a son who's in Georgia Tech studying mechanical engineering, and a daughter who's about to graduate from high

school, and another son who's an artist. So the youngest is the only one who looks like he might go into music.

Q: With all the things you've seen over the year, I imagine you're pretty happy that most of them are pursuing more respectable occupations.

Moe: No, not at all. Whatever they want to do, as long as they don't steal.

Q: What was it like when the Velvets were inducted into the Rock N Roll Hall of Fame. Were you surprised when you heard that you made it?

Moe: No, I was surprised when we didn't make it. The first four times we were nominated, we didn't make it. When we were nominated the first time, I called up Lou and I called up John and I was so excited. And they both said to me, Relax, no way we're going to get in. And then they explained to me how it worked and why we wouldn't be elected. And they were right. But even so, I was really hurt when we didn't make the first time.

Q: Did you feel vindicated when you finally did get in?

Moe: By that point, it was hard to get excited. But it did feel good.

Q: I think it was John Cale who said that your induction proved that you didn't have to sell a lot of records to be an important band. And that's certainly true.

Moe: Yes, it certainly is. At least I certainly feel that way.

Q: Every rock critic alive today venerates what you did, but I was wondering how the press treated you when those records first came

out. They were so far ahead of their time I'm sure a lot of writers didn't get it.

Moe: Most of them just weren't terribly interested.

Q: One of the ways I discovered the Velvet Underground was by reading Lester Bangs, and he has always been a hero of mine. Were you aware of his writing and that he was such a champion of your work?

Moe: I don't recall if he was writing about us when we were still together. I was aware that he liked us later, but I don't remember what the time period was.

Q: By the time he was at Creem, I think you were already out of music.

Moe: Well, I stopped playing in, what was it? 1972. And once I stopped playing, I just stopped. That was it.

Q: You mean you didn't have a subscription to Creem magazine back in 1974 when Lester was the editor?

Moe: No. (laughs)

Q: From what I understand, once you left the Velvets, you just started raising a family. Which is exactly what Patti Smith did a few years later.

Moe: Right. I guess I was more of a role model than I thought.

Q: Speaking of that, you mentioned that you get a lot of letters from fans. Is there any special wisdom that you try to pass on?

Moe: I never give advice unless I'm asked for it.

Q: Yes, but I'm sure a lot of young people ask you for advice. They want to be in a band, they want to make it in the music industry... What do you tell them?

Moe: Stay in school.

Q: Now you sound like a mom. (laughter) What was it like touring in the Velvet Underground? Once you got out of New York, it must have been really hard. You were like pioneers, bands just didn't go on tour back then the way they do now.

Moe: It was very, very different. Every town in those days had some old hall. Like the Dom, where we used to play in New York. It was this old Polish dance hall. Just a big empty room. And every city had one of those, left over from vaudeville or probably from the 1800's. And that's where most shows, not just ours but everybody, that's what you played. Just some big open room. And there was no beer sold. There might be sodas and popcorn, something like that. No tables or chairs. And it was kind of a nice thing, actually, much nicer in a lot of ways.

Q: In my own experience, it seems as though touring has on the one hand gotten much easier, but on the other, the whole music world is so much more dog-eat-dog today than it used to be.

Moe: Oh, that aspect, definitely. And the big labels too, they've gotten so much worse. I'm sure they were always horrible to everybody, but they've just gotten even worse than ever, if that's possible. They're not the least bit interested in anyone unless they look exactly like the last group that sold a million records. And that really sucks. And not just for bands, but for the general public, because you don't get to see or hear one-tenth of what's out there. That's a real source of irritation to me. I mean, it irritates the shit out of me to read an article and find that they've

given Madonna \$30 million to make her next record. What? Thirty million dollars. Which means that they have no money left to give to anybody else. So because Madonna has to have thirty million dollars, nobody else gets a chance. And that really sucks.

Q: The other problem today is that even if a new band does get to make a record, the week that their record comes out, there's two dozen other new records being released vying for the same attention. Which brings us back to Magnet. If you weren't doing this tour, I really doubt anyone would have paid much attention to this record.

Moe: I think that's become a very big problem for the industry. There's just too much coming out. There are too many bands releasing records. It would be nice if people would just wake up and stop paying \$15 for a CD because they heard one song on MTV and liked it. And then they got the CD home and find out that the rest of it sucks. Supposedly the industry is pretty jumpy about the near future, because sales have dropped and there have been all sorts of scary signs about what's happening. But it would be nice if people got more discriminating and stopped letting anything be pushed on them as fabulous. How many new bands do you see? Too many. And basically they suck. And maybe not even suck, they're just a big nothing - not interesting or different or even particularly exciting in their genre. Every person who has \$2000 makes a record. And you certainly have a right to do that, but there's just too damn much.

Q: How about your old plans. You mentioned that the Magnet gig was temporary and that your own solo career was your uppermost concern. What's next on that horizon?

Moe: I don't have any immediate plans for recording. But whatever I do next, I want to put it out myself. And that takes some planning and a little bit of money. I'm really sick of record companies, finally. I'm through with that. Because the only service record companies do is they give you the money to make the record. And that's the end of their interest. I think they're really in it just to have a tax write-off. At least, that's how it strikes me at many of these independents, or whatever you call those label. And I'm really sick of it. When I do something, I'm very determined to release it on my own. Do my own promotion, put up a web page, get my own distribution.

Q: You mentioned a web page, are you fairly computer literate?

Moe: I have a computer. I wouldn't say I was literate. I do have my own little web page up. It's not much yet but we're working on it.

Q: Okay, my last question: You've always been the one who's managed to heal all the wounds and get the rest of the Velvets to come back together. With Sterling Morrison gone, do you think that book is finally closed forever?

Moe: I do, although not for that reason. Although of course with Sterling gone, it wouldn't be the same. But I don't think we'll ever do anything together again. With Lou and John, there's just too much animosity there. That irritates the hell out of me too. Because we had such a good time on that reunion tour too, it was a shame for it to have dive-bombed like that. And we sure did have a good time. But that was the one thing I was afraid of when we were putting it together - I didn't want it to wind up with us not being friends when it was over. I wanted for everybody to be friends again, and it's a real shame that it couldn't come out that way.

**Email Moe Tucker at moesite@almatel.net
Visit Moe Tucker's Taj Moe Hall web page at
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THIS IS NOT A FUGAZI INTERVIEW

My first encounter with Washington, DC's Dismemberment Plan was at the 1996 W.E. Festival, where they played this gonzo outdoors show and had hundreds of people dancing and laughing their heads off. And I thought, 'This is not your typical D.C. punk band' - not with this skinny maniac blatting out sour notes on a trombone or jiving his way through torrid tales of pouring champagne over his naked body in his living room at midnight on New Year's Eve and then getting a phone call from his mom. These guys were definitely very different, and very funny; but Dismemberment Plan is far from just a joke band. In their own way, they rock as hard as Fugazi, and each member is a distinctively talented musician. The Dismemberment Plan recently released its second album on DeSoto Records, the D.C. indie run by ex-Jawbox members Bil Barbot and Kim Colletta, entitled The Dismemberment Plan Is Terrified. I caught up with lead singer Travis Morrison by telephone in June while the band was on tour in California. - Jim Testa

Eric Axelson - bass, keyboards

Jason Caddell - guitar, keyboards

Joe Easley - drums

Travis Morrison - lead vocals, trombone, keyboards

Q: If I had to describe Dismemberment Plan in one word, I might say 'wacky' or 'zany' or 'funny,' and none of the words have anything to do with most people's perception of the Washington DC punk scene. Has that been a problem for you?

Travis: Yes and no. I would actually argue that there is humor in a lot of D.C. music. Sometimes the bands that are a second-generation in haven't really received it, but it is there. For instance, I think all the bands that Ian MacKaye has been in have had a great sense of humor, going back to that Minor Threat song that ends "boo fuckin' hoo." Or the line, "you make a great cop, you pig." That's really funny. And I think there is a thread of pissed-off humor that runs through that music. Some of the bands, all right, are pretty utterly devoid of humor, especially the ones who were influenced by the kind of punk-rock that came out of Louisville, the branch of D.C. music that starts with Hoover and bands like that. So it's been both a blessing and a curse. It's enabled us to reach people who were dissatisfied with what was going on in the D.C. scene: I think the humor... either really turns people on, because they don't see a lot of it, or it turns people off. But I think there are plenty of bands from D.C. who have been funny. I think (Nation Of) Ulysses was hilarious, and in a very righteous way, not goofy at all. I think Smartwetcrazy had some exceptionally incisive and funny one-liners in their lyrics. Even Rites Of Spring had some really mordant moments. It was wry, it wasn't pie-in-the-face humor, but it was there. I think all the really great bands from D.C. have it in there, because humor has to be in there if you're going to present a real 3-dimensional emotional picture. So I'd argue that there is an element of humor in D.C. music, maybe not to the level that we take it, but still there.



the dismemberment plan

Q: I don't know if kids today who only know Minor Threat from the records can pick up on it, but having seen them live, I have to agree with you. Minor Threat had a really savage wit. Ian is just a great performer, and as you said, a part of that has to be the ability to be funny.

Travis: I think the lyrics are packed with really great one-liners. Ian MacKaye has always had that element to his songwriting. It's not laugh out loud funny, but a smirk grows on my face whenever I hear his lyrics, because I know what he's talking about. And since there's always been an element of humor in the music that he's made, it's filtered down.

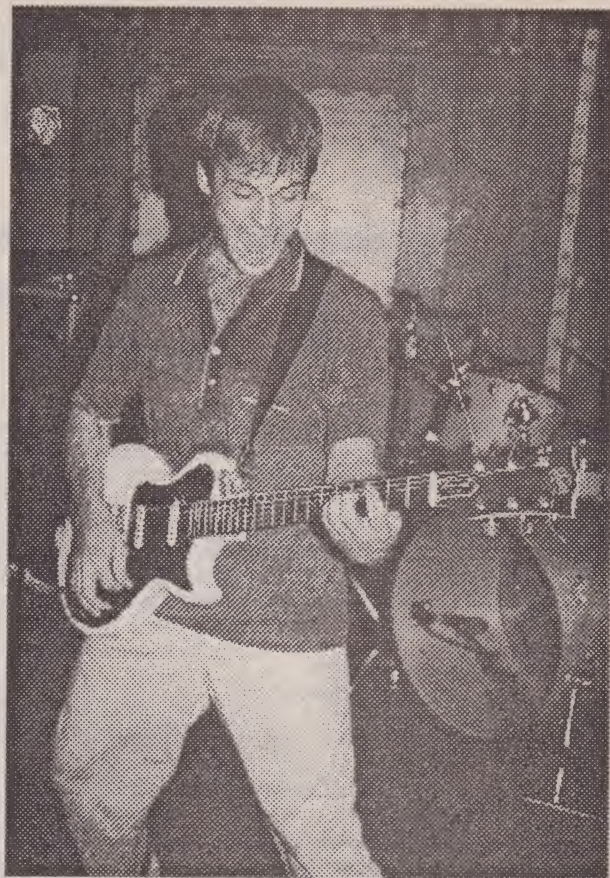
Q: Of course, it gets hard to detect by the time it filters down to a Dischord band like Branch Manager.

Travis: You know, I think Branch Manager has a sense of humor, but it's pretty absurdist. They're really... virtuosic? Is that a word?

Q: They're good musicians.

Travis: Yeah. They're excellent musicians. And there have been times when they had me on my knees laughing. There was one show we saw in, of all places, Kalamazoo, Michigan, where just at the height of this noise freakout, the bassist broke into this perfect imitation of Aaron Neville. And everyone knew who he was doing, even though it was totally without context. And if you can imitate Aaron Neville and get it across, that's pretty spectacular.

Q: Let's get back to your band. You look like four guys who met in college and started a band. Is that basically the genesis of Dismemberment Plan?



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Travis: Basically. To be totally honest, we met before that. Eric the bassist and I had mutual friends in Eric's band. Eric and I were part of the same high-school punk rock scene, but we really didn't know each other then, and then he went away to college. He met our guitarist, Jason, and after college, we got together to start the band and got in touch with Steve Cummings, our first drummer, who had also been part of that same high school scene. Then Steve left to concentrate on his job and we picked up Joe. Joe is the outsider. He's known us about two years. The rest of us, I think you can kind of tell we've known each other for a really long time.

Q: I assume you hired Joe for his beefy good looks?

Travis: Oh yeah, exactly. (laughs) We auditioned a bunch of guys and they played well but they didn't have the look. He does karate and weight-lifting and stuff, whereas every week I'll do a couple of push ups and that's my idea of physical fitness. Joe can actually do the splits, and do those kicks where his foot ends up an inch from your face. He's our heart-breaking indigent jock. He is so a drummer. That's the only thing I can say about him.

Q: Was the flamboyant goofiness part of the formula right from the start of the band? I mean, was that an element that you knew you wanted to be part of your music?

Travis: I'd say so. Personally, I've always been pretty much a ham. It's a reflection of who we are, and maybe on top of that, there's maybe a bit of dissatisfaction of what we were seeing in the bands we were going to see, back when we started playing, which would have been '92. That was right when Nirvana hit big, and everyone was grimacing. And I think to a certain extent, we were reacting to that. We didn't see anyone else exactly like us. But I also think it's

just who we are, which is basically just non-stop joke-cracking goofballs. I don't think I could put on a wallet chain and face my amp and scowl my way through an hour of rock and roll if I tried. And also, the artists who have always inspired me have been the ones who had that style - James Brown, or even Fugazi put on a very kinetic, flamboyant show. It's not quite as goofy as we are, but I think they're definitely students of rock theater. I don't think they would deny that, they just want to take it to a more human level.

Q: That's certainly what really attracted me about your band. You're the perfect antidote to this cult of anti-personality that's infected a certain segment of punk, where people get on stage and steadfastly refuse to acknowledge the fact that they're there to be entertaining.

Travis: I don't understand it. I think people tend to have a lot of ideas about issues like 'legitimacy' and 'realness.' And I think that especially, the people who come to our shows - who tend to be upper middle class, educated folk with a lot of ideas about philosophy and art - have some issues about legitimacy of expression and entertainment. I think that's a pitfall that a lot of bands fall into. A lot of bands just want to make Capital A 'Art.' And you certainly can't do that if you look like you're amusing yourself or having a good time. They see it as an eternal seesaw. But it never made a whole lot of sense to me. But getting back to the issue of art and entertainment, I think Nation Of Ulysses were very important in that regard, because they really proved that you could have a good time and still have something to say... and that, in fact, the something-to-say could be intertwined with the good time. Braniac was another band like that. They went places we would never have the balls to go, like with the star-spangled sequined outfits. They were another band that I used to love to see because they had a lot of fun and still meant something. So I think it is getting better, and

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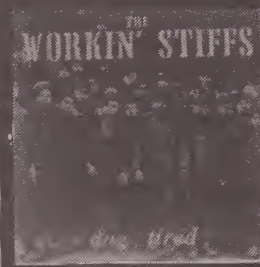
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that is something that's important to us.

Q: The one thing everybody knows about D.C. is that life is a lot easier for a band if you can get your foot into that inside circle - the whole Discord/Positive Force social sphere. And being on DeSoto Records and having a connection to Jawbox gives you that. How did that all happen?

Travis: It's kind of weird. It's hard to say if we're really in the clique or not. I can remember back in the day talking to J Robbins and hearing him say how he felt like a total outcast in the D.C. punk rock scene. And that would so puzzle my 19-year old head: 'What are you talking about, you're in *Jawbox*?' So I think the whole issue of scenes tends to be a Zen illusion that people play on themselves, when they interpret the apparent gathering of other people. Our contact with it has been limited. Ian MacKaye has shown support and approval, and has helped us in a good way. And of course the major one was putting out a record on DeSoto. I have to admit, that really helped. That finally gave the signal to a lot of kids around the D.C. area that this isn't just another bad bar band, they're not some local metal band despite their name. But to a certain extent, we're still not part of the scene. If being part of the scene means hanging out with the Warmers and playing shows with the Makeup and Kerosene 454, those things aren't going to happen... There are bands in D.C. who tend to play with each other all the time, and it's a very small group of people, when you think about it. So there really isn't a door to have your foot in. It's just a matter of getting an imprimatur somewhere that says, yeah, this band is going to be interesting and worth spending your five dollars to go see. That happens when the word of mouth about you becomes positive, and happened with us by putting out the record with DeSoto. As for everything else, it's not really relevant and I think it's really just a kind of metaphysical trap to even discuss it.

Q: How did you get to know Bill and Kim from DeSoto? Did you have mutual friends, or did you open for Jawbox and they saw you?

Travis: No, none of that. We just sent them a tape. We had already done a single by ourselves, and then we recorded five songs and we sent them that, and they really dug it. It was really cool, actually. There was absolutely no connections. Also, at that time, we were doing... We will do the absolutely wrong thing and not even know it. Like we would do reggae songs and stuff like that. Just totally suspect stuff. So at the time, we weren't really going to get anywhere in what would loosely be called the Dischord world anyway. So it was really great when we sent them the tape. They had absolutely no idea who we were and they liked it. There was nothing personal about it.

Q: Well, you've probably just given hope to 10,000 disenfranchised teenage bands in the D.C. suburbs dreaming about breaking into that scene.

Travis: To a certain extent, I hope I do. I've been reading all these interviews dealing with the bottom falling out of the whole alternative market, and these interviews with various pillars of the D.C. scene, and they're talking about how they're dissatisfied because the whole scene has become calcified and stale. And what's supposed to happen is that bands are supposed to take smaller bands under their wing, and reach out to musicians and help expand the sound of the local scene, and I'm reading all that and I'm thinking, Yeah, you're damn right you should have!

So now, we're getting tapes from all the oddball kids out in the suburbs. There's this band called the Glenmont Soundsystem who are great, who have this weird vision of half Trenchmouth punk rock and half Tribe Called Quest, new-school rap. And it's not all there yet, they've just started playing, but some of it is really excellent. And as we get more clout and get more importance in the Washington music world, yeah, I'm going to start seeking those bands out and try to help them. Because we had to fight pretty hard and I don't want

19-year olds with oddball ideas to feel like castaways. It's important to encourage them.

Q: In terms of outside D.C., you're on tour right now as we're talking, how has the reaction been across the country now that the second album is out?

Travis: We polarize people, there's no two ways about that. I think people know pretty quickly whether they're down with us or not. And that's fine. I don't think we're for everybody. Some shows are great and some aren't. It all depends on the atmosphere of the room. We've had shows where everyone goes crazy and people are dancing, and then we've had shows where, whatever this new synthesis is that we're doing, the people there don't want this synthesis to happen. There are certain elements that, for whatever reasons people like alternative music, it's also because they don't like those other elements. They don't like dance music. They don't like music that has major scale melodies. They don't like senses of humor. So those crowds can be a little harder to work. They don't boo, they just stand there with their backpacks and look at us and wait patiently. And I don't blame them. They know what they like, and I know what I like.

Q: One thing I've definitely noticed from the times I've seen you is that you really feed off the audience. The more they're into it, the wilder you get.

Travis: Very much so. And one thing I've noticed is that the shows that the truly classic shows, I think the audience is part of it. When I say things to the crowd and someone says something back, that's when I know things are going to be good. People are in a participatory mood and they feel like part of the whole thing. It sounds like this ridiculous rock and roll spiritualism, but there can be communi-



cation, and it's not just some weird spiritual thing. It's definitely concrete, like them saying something to us and us saying something back, and then somebody wandering on stage and breakdancing. Which has happened. That kind of stuff is what we encourage, and the more we get it, the better the shows. And when the crowd are just mute punk rockers, it can be kind of hairy.

Q: What's on the horizon?

Travis: We're going to be doing a 7-inch on DeSoto and a 7-inch on another D.C. label. And we're going to be writing. We had a big burst of songwriting after we finished the last album, and we've added a few wrinkles, like I've started playing this small keyboard. And we're going to try playing more in the area, doing weekends and going up to New York and New Jersey, Providence, Baltimore... Generally just trying to go out and play a lot, and then maybe in the fall, tour some more. It's kind of funny, after all these of this Pavement-like stumbling as a band, it seems that as a group we're becoming more interested in doing more and more.

Q: Have you reached the point where you're getting interest from major labels?

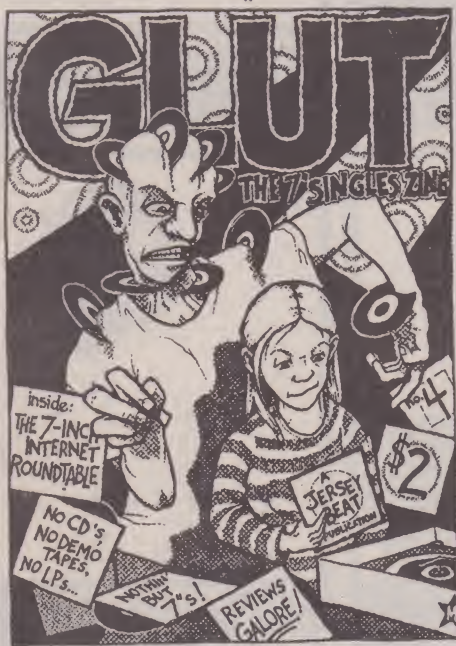
Travis: Yeah, to a certain extent, and I don't know what to think. I go back and forth on it. I tend to think that we have a boutique sound. I don't think it's for everybody. And a lot of my favorite bands are like this, like Trenchmouth, combining a couple of things and when they get the combination together just right, it just drops straight through the cracks. Even though we have melodies and stuff, I think we're more from that tradition, just underground experimenters. As far as major labels, we really haven't been wined and dined too much. And I'm ready, I'm all set for wine and some free food. Beyond that, I don't really know.

Q: Since you're friends with Jawbox, did their experiences being on Atlantic affect how you might feel about signing with a major label?

Travis: You know, I really think I've learned more from being on DeSoto than I learned from Jawbox' experiences on Atlantic. And that is, I just want to be in a situation where I can do as much as I want to do no matter what. And to me, I think that's worth keeping a day job. I just don't ever want to be stymied. I don't want to have to throw my hands in the air at some guy in a suit and say, 'What do you mean I can't do this now?' When I think about signing to a major, I just think that I'd want it to be as much like being on DeSoto as possible. (laughs)

Like, I know the President/CEO of DeSoto. If something happens, I can get on the phone with that person and have it out. So if some other company wants my band, and wants to encroach on this very delicate relationship I have with these people, then I want to know the people at the top of the company. I want the phone number of the president of the company and I want to be able to pick up the phone and yell at the guy. Because otherwise, if the top of the company isn't listening, then the whole company is not interested in the band.

When I think of Jawbox, I think of bands like Split Enz or XTC. They were never so much punk standard bearers as they were these crazy pop scientists, who just happened to play really loud and really powerful. And you know what? Those bands just don't sell shit. Pop scientists don't get anywhere. That's what I learned from them. These people who go back in the lab and create these not-found-from-nature monstrosities, you can't sell those. And I like to think we're kind of in that category too.



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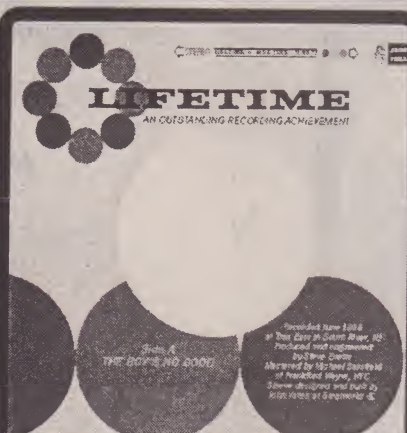


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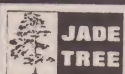


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3 LOST SOULS (Drastic Measures Inc., PO Box 1793, Kennesaw GA 30144) The first cut is what they used to call a "Power Ballad." It's exquisitely produced, with rich guitar tones and a drum sound that Peter Criss would kill for, but the music is so cheesy you could melt the tape and spread it on chips for nachos. It gets better, though, going to mid-tempo, Classic-Rock styled tunes that sound a bit like old Rod Stewart. Produced by Kramer, of all people, although it bears none of his trademark aural scumminess. - Jim T.

12 DAYS - "UnRelaxed" (No address) Although 12 Days hails from NJ, this has Seattle written all over it, from the brawny low-pitched vocals to the grunge guitars to the overriding sense of angst in the tempos and lyrics. The band even writes like Pearl Jam, with dramatic stops and dynamics. That all might sound like a putdown, but it's not, just a comparison. In fact, this is powerful, fluid, and well-paced rock, with powerful vocals and melodies. - Jim T.

ABSOLUTELY BOXSPRING - "W.E. Fest Sampler" (8708 60th Ave., Berwyn hts MD 20740) This starts off as pleasant enough pop-rock with a slight psychedelic influence, but the more AB layered on the wah-wah funk riffs, drum solos, and wanky guitar runs, the more I wanted to put another tape in my Walkman. - Jim T.

THE ACETONES (507 Lark Ct., Novato CA 94947) Three-chord New Wavey pop with female vocals and heavy doses of lyrical irony and ennui, inspiring the inevitable Blondie comparisons. The guitars have a nice crunchy sound and the gal can sing. - Jim T.

BACKHAND (No Address) Jersey shore moshcore. Powerful driving guitars avoid metal by going for a harsher, more industrial tone. The corrosive shouted and screamed vocals let you know they mean it. Fans of both old school hc and new jack Rage Against The Machine-type industrial should dig it. - Jim T.

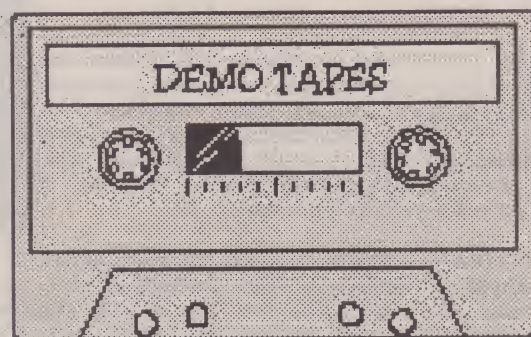
JOHN BARTLES - "Snot For Everybody" (PO Box 106, Livonia Center NY 14488) Good dumb fun - emphasis on *dumb*. "Happy Birthday, Motherfucker" is followed by "Merry Christmas, Motherfucker," "Happy New Year, Motherfucker," and for a change of pace, "Happy Memorial Day, You Asshole," which is then followed by a series of raunchy blues tunes with punchline lyrics. Imagine if Mojo Nixon had grown up in Brooklyn munching lead paint chips instead of barbecue and you get the general idea. - Jim T.



FOOTSTONE

photo by Andy Peters

BOB FIELDS (403 14th Street, Hoboken NJ 07030) With his high, straining vocals, lead singer Doug sounds a bit like Sting, but the crackling, distorted guitars and powerhouse rhythm section chug away like vintage Soul Asylum. Doug sings with so much passion and conviction that you never realize the lyrics don't quite make sense, but that's part of the fun. Inspirational verse: "You know you never make sense/ when you finish my sentences/ I just want to pay rent / like all the dead people." A very impressive demo that's whet my appetite for more. - Jim T.



✓ **CHEFS OF THE FUTURE** (215 E. 24th St. #616, New York NY 10010) Garagey punk rock, bouncy and fun. "Ben Gay Weasel" sounds like Screeching Weasel, with a squiggly lead guitar line over three-chord riffage and funny lyrics putting down punk rock wannabes: "I wanna be a punker, that's how I'll get laid, wanna make a record, and someday I might get paid." - Jim T.

COSMIC AVENGER (201 997-3138) The band's bio kids about adopting weird British sub-genres (Canterbury-bubblegum, Acid-Motown-Music Hall, or Shakespearean Thunder rock) but this Jersey City-based quartet's low-fi innocent, boy/girl pop songs sound more like a cross between puberty-era Ween and the Kinks. The sub-basement production distorts the guitars until they sound like kazooes but that actually adds to the charm. - Jim T.

✓ **ELEVEN STRAP** (PO Box 3699, Rapid City SD 57709) Five blasts of explosive, rage-filled hardcore, each cut more powerful than the last, with outstanding use of dynamics. When the guitars are pounding away, the singer often lowers his voice to a whisper - then WHAM!, back to a scream. Fans of both Emo and Old School HC should love this. - Jim T.

DARLING - "Happy Belated Sedation" (1131 C street, Washougal, WA 98671) Morrissey is alive and well. This demo tape contains four depressing songs that almost made me pull a Kurt Cobain. Even when the songs pick up the pace it's still done in a gothic, depressing manner. You can tell lead singer LaRue de Pourpre is truly unhappy. "Happy Belated Sedation" is the best tune on this tape. If you enjoy downer music, these guys do it well. I hate myself. - Denis Sheehan

✓ **EVELYN FOREVER** (19 Condict St., New Brunswick NJ 08901) Despite the girl's name, Evelyn Forever consists of four (talented) guys with fresh-faced boy-next-door appeal. When they polish the harmonies (as on the fluffy "Rock N Roll Girl" and the bouncy "Seventeen,") it's pure power pop, cuddly and innocent and reminiscent of the Gigolo Aunts. On scruffier tunes like "What I Need," the band cranks it up a bit and those yummy harmonies morph into punky yelps. A very nice four-song demo here that whet my appetite for more. - Jim T.

FANNYCRACKER (348 Warrenton Rd., Falmouth VA 22405)

✓ **FANNYCRACKER** (348 Warrenton Rd., Falmouth VA 22405) White-guy raps over hardcore guitars/drums and percussion. Even though I'm not a huge fan of this style, I have to admit this rocks. The music locks into a solid groove, allowing the two rappers to spit out their rhymes with aggression without losing that funky backbeat. Extra credit for the well-designed tape sleeve, with photos and shoutouts. Cool web page at <http://www.thewatch.com/bands/fc>. This group obviously has its act together. Fans of 311 or Rage Against The Machine should eat this up. - Jim T.

FLICKER (422 Admiral St. Providence RI 02908) Live, Flicker are a squirrely mock-metal trio who wail - and they're laugh-out-loud funny. This demo reveals another side of the band - gonzo sonic experimentalists into trippy noise jams and chaotic dissonance. This isn't your father's old Sonic Youth records, though; this stuff is *weird*. Best taken in small doses but pretty cool nonetheless. - Jim T.

FOOTSTONE - "Schmeckle City Rubdown" (Email mavney@idt.net) Reborn as a trio, Footstone grinds a rough edge onto rollicking tunes that would be power-pop without the aggressive drums and bass and edgy, almost Jawbreakerish emotion of the vocals. Now that's handling guitar as well as vocals, Ralph has less of a chance to grandstand with those million-dollar pipes of his, so his voice still has power and range but with more focus and none of those cheesy vocal pyrotechnics he used to indulge in. - Jim T.

GENDER 2000 (308 West 30th St. Suite 6a, New York NY 10001) Ahh, the soothing sounds from the light side of a ska/rock band. These guys follow the little ska, little rock recipe for five songs. Gender 2000 reminds me of an old Boston band called Plate O'Shrimp, minus the horns. Although the guitarist tends to get carried away with some of his solos, all the songs are good. "Going Down" is very cool. - Denis Sheehan

GUCHLRUG - "Legend of the Black Squirrel" (Guchlrug, 24299 Rodas Rd., Bonita Springs FL 34135) Suicide soundtrack for the departing members of the Heaven's Gate cult. A.K.A. Pure crap. - Gary Mc.

HELLBENDERS (Contact: George Dubose @ (212) 352-0818) Musically they are straight forward Rock N' Roll. They remind of a bar band that decided to rebel and do original songs. - Gary Mc.

THE INTERPRETERS (Volcano Recordings) - What is it with all these power-pop bands? I'm loving it. The Interpreters have a brash, snotty sound, bright chirpy guitars, and coy, melodic boy vocals. It's New Wavey but not in a retro sense, with lots of harmonies on the catchy choruses. Just three songs on this tape but they're all killer - witty, clever, and very well-written. Watch for an album later this year. - Jim T.

MR. SATISFIER (51 Westcott Rd., Princeton NJ 08540) This 4-track demo from a young Princeton band delivers three tongue-in-cheek odes to superheroes and teen angst ("Space Ghost," "Boba Fett Love," "I Ain't Right") It sounds like they're pretty new to both songwriting and playing their instruments, although there's a certain innocent charm (reminiscent of early Ween) as they thrash around and try to figure it all out. - Jim T.

MORE - "Rock Music, or Numb In The 90's" (215 413-0494) Probably the best band in Philly poised for stardom, with nods to Cheap Trick, Nirvana, the Beatles, and Screamin Trees and yet with their own vibe. Rock with punk and kick, laidback cool vocals with hooks galore. Try to grab a copy. - Frank P.



Velour 44

✓ **NOMEN NODUM** (9 Wilpert Road, Bridgewater, NJ 08807) Straightforward post-punk flavored rock that sounds like it was made by a group of post-hardcore guys, since almost all of the vocals are shouted instead of sung. Their electric-guitar based tunes hit hard and the guitarist rips off some great solos, but their acoustic songs are kinda dopey. - Rob Thornton

PETROFFEN - "100% Fuel" (Connie Phillips, Rte. 1, Box 2950, Elgin OK 73538) They still like it hard & heavy in Oklahoma, I guess. This is balls-to-the-floor metal with annoying blues-drawl vocals. If there are any Alice In Chains fans left out there, they might dig this. Otherwise, avoid. - Jim T.

PILLAGE PEOPLE - "Shiny Happy People" (Sweaty Ballsack Records, PO Box 221, Delaware NJ 07833) If you've ever heard the Angry Samoans (imagine a ruder, cruder, and more politically incorrect version of the early Queens' 3-chord whompama,) then you know where this South Jersey combo is coming from. Snotty, lo-fi, and irreverent past the point of insult, they're everything their parents were afraid punk-rock would turn them into. Good going, kids! - Jim T.

PRETTY POLLY - "Because You Were Lonely" (PO Box 305, Lawrence NY 11559) The name gives it away - this is Nirvana-styled grunge, complete with angsty vocals and surging dynamics (soft verses, LOUD choruses,) with a heavy foot on the distortion pedal. The songwriting and sincere emotions make it work, but I'd like to hear them get back in a studio instead of constantly sending out these crude, live-to-tape demos. - Jim T.

✓ **THE REVEALS** (Theresa Minutillo, 811 Bloomfield St. Hoboken NJ 07030) A damn near perfect meeting of power-pop and garage-rock, with hooky melodies and rough-edged guitars and vocals. Imagine the Dave Clark 5 crossed with the Shadows Of Knight, or for a more contemporary comparison, the Plimsouls playing through Nirvana's Marshall stacks. Power, feeling, tunes, smiles... I like it! - Jim T.

SINDE KISE - 3 song Demo (c/o Jaffess, 113 Willow Ave. 4th Floor, Hoboken NJ 07030) Talk about kismet: Sindé Kise (pronounced 'Cindy Kice') are three gals from Hoboken whose founding members met in the ladies room at FBI headquarters in Washington, DC. (They call their publishing company "Three Girls With Jobs Music.") Their three song cassette is dripping with New Wave attitude, bouncy bass lines, strummy guitars, and coy vocals. The musicianship might be rudimentary but it's solid, especially the (always tricky) harmony vocals on the perky choruses. Very much in the tradition of Blondie and the Waitresses, the lyrics stake out a no-nonsense feminist identity that's still sexy and fun. - Jim T.

SLUGWRENCH - "Demo No. 2" (Intolerance Records, 4475 E 31 St #284, Tulsa OK 74135) This isn't a demo tape, it's a Do It Yourself Migraine kit. Jason Shepherd is a Trent Reznor-type home tapist on the twisted industrial tip, only Shepherd's programmed rhythms, samples, sequences and psycho vocals make *Pretty Hate Machine* sound like power-pop in comparison. - Jim T.

SOLACE - Former Jersey ShoreCore guys doing the I sludgecore thing. Pounding drums and brutal guitars give this a nice bludgeoning heaviness, although the Ozzy-esque metal vocals on some tracks are an acquired taste, at best. Arena rock for shut-ins and club rats. Play very loud or don't bother. - Jim T.

SOLARIS (732 214-1419) Alex Saville and Amy Jacob of Ex Vegas team with veteran New Brunswick drummer Dave Reynolds (Spiral Jetty, Urchins) and newcomer bassist Mike Kabok in this new group. The sonic guitars, throbbing funk bass, and provocative vocals on this 3-song demo suggest Thurston Moore jamming with the Bush Tetras. "X Marks The Spot" teams with paranoia and mystery; something about Vince Foster's body, from what I can hear. Stay tuned, this powerful group should be a major player in the New Brunswick scene by the end of the summer.

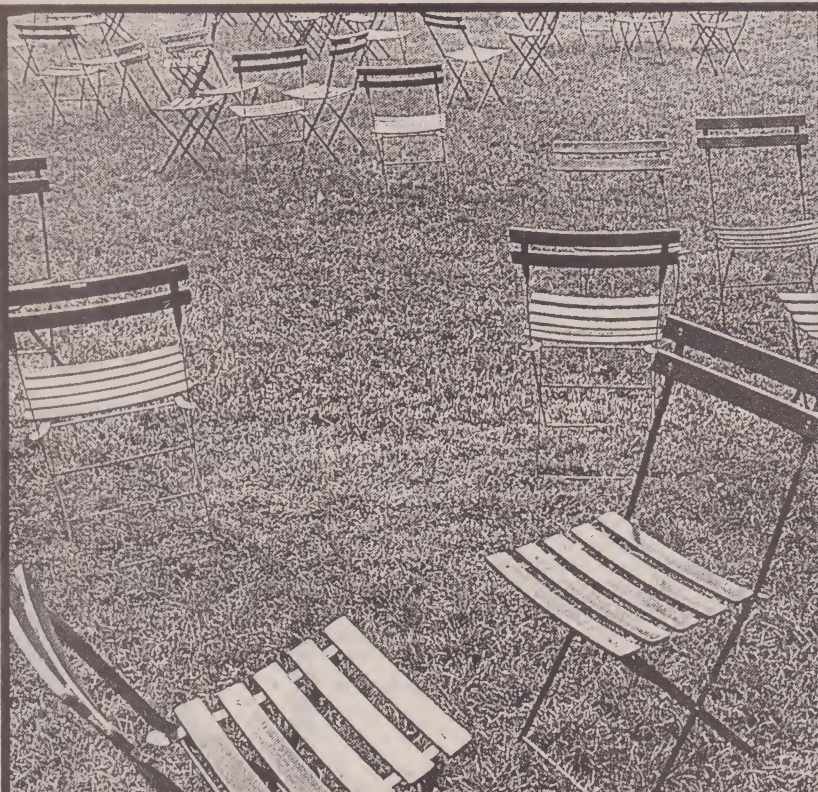
SPIRAL JETTY - "Take Three" (Hedgehog Records, 2 Draeger Pl. South River NJ 08882) Look who's back. NJ's lovable suburban nerds have regrouped, thanks to singer/guitarist Adam Potkay's return to the Garden State (bassist Andy Gesner and drummer Dave Reynolds have been playing together in the Urchins.) A dozen years ago, Spiral Jetty blended the Talking Heads and the Feelies into its own frenetic but somewhat derivative pop tunes. This time around, those elements are still present but the group (with the addition of keyboards) has outgrown its influences; nowadays it just sounds like

Spiral Jetty. How many other bands could write a delightful little love song about finding a girl while shopping for produce at the Shop Rite, or cover Jonathan Richman's schmaltzy "Affection" without the slightest hint of camp or condescension? Welcome back. - Jim T.

STAPLED SHUT - "L.A. Times" (PO Box 4005, W. Covina CA 91791) Crudely produced speedmetal/hardcore with screamed, almost primal vocals and slow mosh parts. Sound familiar? - Jim T.

UNCLENCH - Demo (98 Oak St., Apt. 4704, Lindenwold, NJ, 08021) Three songs. Fast, metally hardcore with shouted vocals. Slightly cliched lyrics range from personal politics and insight ("Valediction" and "Release") to taking a shot at various forms of oppression ("Under God"). The music isn't all that groundbreaking either, but there are some neat guitar parts. I'm not a huge fan of this sub-genre of hardcore, but if you like moshable stuff with crunchy guitars and straight ahead drums, check it out. Those down with Sick Of It All will probably dig Unclench. I'd like to hear their next demo or release and see where they go from here. - Shawn Scallen

VELOUR 44 - "Angst Is Funny" (310 Monmouth St., Hightstown NJ 08520) A very nice 5-song pop demo, with three different members taking turns on lead vocals, buoyant (but bittersweet) melodies, energetic guitars and fast tempos. Drummer Andrew sings too (shades of Husker Du!) as does guitarist Chris Pierson, with nice harmony backups from the gals sweetening the choruses. The fast parts of "Fine," with Lisa and Elena harmonizing on lead vocals, sounds a bit like South Jersey's answer to Veruca Salt. "Velour," with a rising chord progression and swirly guitars that give it a psychedelic, Byrdsy flavor. Favorite cut: "Car Song," the catchiest and punkiest tune, with cute, clever lyrics about riding bikes and school lunches. Inspirational verse: "Going steady with your mom and it feels all right!" - Jim T.



BRANCH MANAGER

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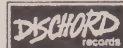
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Them's Skankin' Words!

by Chuck X. Wharton

Jah Behind The Ska

Rastafarian beliefs are easy to study through religious reggae music produced in the last 20 years. But believers were also behind reggae's grandfather -- the ska music so many love today. Begin with the first ska band, the Skatalites. The band members' beliefs even caused them problems, reports *World Music: The Rough Guide*. "Their Rastafarianism counted against them and radio stations gave more time to the blander sounds of bands like Byron Lee and the Dragonaires, who were patronized by Edward Seaga's studio," the Guide's writers say.

In the early 1960s, many mainstream Jamaicans believed the dreadlocks Rastamen were in a strange and violent sect. Some even believed they were killers who especially went after whites. Island Records founder Chris Blackwell, who introduced the 1964 pop-ska hit *My Boy Lollipop* by Millie Small, got a chance to find out what Rastafarians really made of, well before he went into the record business. In the mid-1950s, Blackwell and friends were motorboating along the coast of Hellshire, Jamaica, when their vessel hit a reef and swamped. Blackwell went for help along the desolate coast. After a long time searching -- when all seemed lost -- Blackwell found a hut, explains biographer Stephen Davis in *Bob Marley*.



"When he drew closer, a dreadlocked Rastaman looked out at him and Chris Blackwell almost died from fright," Davis says. "All you ever heard was that Rastas were killers. All you heard was that they were anti-white." But the Rasta gave Blackwell a drink of water and a place to lie down for a few moments to regain his strength."

Blackwell lost consciousness. When he came to, a group of Rastafarians, adults and children, were watching over him. They fed him and, before taking him back to Kingston where he got transportation to rescue his friends, they read to Blackwell the Bible verses that prophesied Ethiopia's role in history and the divine lineage of His Imperial Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie I, Jah Rastafari, the Lion of Judah. Davis describes Blackwell's experience as stepping into another world. By 1959, he had begun recording music in Jamaica and brought the sounds with him when he relocated Island Records to London. Very few Caribbean sounds, other than mento or calypso, had gotten recorded before Blackwell started. He produced one of Bob Marley's first ska releases in England in 1963, *One Cup of Coffee*, for the Beverley label. When Marley approached him about recording the Wailers in 1971, the relationship lead to 1973's *Catch A Fire* -- the first reggae album, although there had been plenty of singles released earlier. Rastafarian influence has broadened far beyond the simple-living people Blackwell met in that hut in the late 1950s. As Leonard E. Barrett Sr. reports in his book, *The Rastafarians*, "It has members in almost all the professions. There are lawyers, physicians, journalists and, of course, Rastafarian writers of books and articles." Add to that the musicians, many of whom offer a sincere glimpse of their beliefs if you want to explore them.

By the time you read this, Island Records' new three-CD, 52-track *Arkology* collection of Lee Scratch Perry's music production, should be available. The CD tracks, digitally remastered rarities from Perry's Black Ark Studio, range from echoes of U.S. rhythm and blues to cries from Jah's people for justice and release from oppression. The artists include Perry, the Upsetters, the Congos, Junior Murvin, Max Romeo, Jah Lion, the Heptones and more. Besides exploring the Rastafarianism in some of the songs, and Jamaican music in general, you can enjoy the individual genius of Perry here. Black Ark was a four-track studio and many producers feel like Perry could make it sound like eight tracks. The magic that ended when the studio burned in 1979 is faithfully represented in these recordings. Whether ska, rocksteady or reggae, someone once explained that the downbeat that marks the music's place represents oppression. The upbeat that we all listen for and dance to represents the people's answer to that oppression, or deliverance from it. That's one of ska's aspects that makes this music so satisfying to explore.

RECORD REVIEWS

BUCK-O-NINE - *Twenty-Eight Teeth* (TVT Records, 23 East 4th St., New York NY 10003) This San Diego-based ska band intends to stay close to their ska roots, while also exploring funk and punk. They'll make a lot of fans happy. They've got tributes to Musical Youth, The Misfits, and Joe Jackson on this recording. And they've got a nice tight sound with a trumpet player, Tony Curry. Trombonist Dan Albert ain't



bad either, when he gets the chance to shine. Guitarist Jonas Kleiner keeps his fuzz switch on. This recording is punk-positive.

DR. RING DING & THE SENIOR ALL STARS - *Dandimite* (Moon Ska Records, PO Box 1412 New York NY 10276) Another of this label's traditional ska offerings feature's a group of premier German talents, led by Richie 'Dr. Ring Ding Sr.' on trombone, melodica, harmonica, percussion and vocals. These musicians lead explorers through all of ska's permutations as the music echoes throughout jazz, rhythm and blues, reggae, rock steady, ragga/bogle and rude-boy styles. The recording includes several strong tributes to Skatalites members.

JOE FERRY - *Skallelujah* (Big Music, 84 Kraft Ave., Bronxville NY 10708) I frowned a little that producing-great Ferry only gave us seven tracks on this holiday season-theme record. But he and his musicians packed the selections with such inspired musicianship, I just repeated the seven enough times to simulate a two-CD set -- more than once. Ferry has been accepted enough by the general music world to have been nominated for multiple Grammys and has produced blues and soul greats -- Curtis Mayfield, Dr. John -- as well as The Skatalites. He brings to listeners hungry for traditionally rooted ska melodies from Mozart, Handel and spirituals like *Rock My Soul* and *I Heard The Voice*. Don't mistake this for another novelty album. No dogs bark *Jingle Bells*. Ferry's treatments are respectful of the composers, even those whose names are lost to history. The ska rocks steady enough for demanding devotees and the jazz-drenched horns handle their solo work well enough to grab the most jaded French Quarter tourist. And technically impressive, this holiday visit was caught all in one night, as it played, in a Bronxville studio.

PERFECT THYROID - *musical barnacles* (Shanachi Entertainment, 13 Laight St., 6th Fl, New York NY 10013) To begin to understand this band, you have to spell the name perfectly with all the letters right, as *PERfect ThYroid*. These guys are working on a formula that will excite everyone devoted to ska's roots, not to mention those critical of rock's past. Note the track, *Short Attention Span*, "Back where and when I come from, people banged on hollow trees to have their fun...Now we're living in the age of the short attention span, all of our songs are three minutes long." Punks wanting to cast a vote against commercial compartmentalizing of pop music might want to buy a *Perfect ThYroid* recording. Their guitarist knows where the fuzz switch is on his instrument. And their cries against greed and oppression certainly speak in favor of ska's roots.

SKINNERBOX - *What You Can Do, What You Can't* (Moon Ska) The legendary group, led and produced by the equally legendary King Django, landmark work dedicated this album, as they have, with "Praises be to Almighty Jah the Omniscient and Omnipotent." There are many beautiful moments on this record, especially in *Feeling Small*, punctuated with prayer, "Guide I in my action and forgive me my transgressions as flesh is weak, so sanctify my spirit." There are tense and anger-filled moments, as in *2-Face*, "You got a big mouth/Try to do something/Spoiled little rich kid, all you do is bitch./Did you think you'd be vindicated?" A laugh or two, then some moments of musical transcendence in the simply profound *This A New York*. "So put some time into thinkin bout culture/And stop trying to be such a fashion plate./You're like a vulture./Your culture is the sotry of your peoples/ progress." This music is driving when it should be and moving when we need it to be, with some tributes to swing and funk. Those approaching this album, with the woman cavorting with her poodle on the cover, are admonished by Greg Casseus, "The musically riddimwise selections you are presently

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experiencing...tend to take the scenic route around the path narrowly defined nowadays as ska."

TRICIA & THE SUPERSONICS - *Miss Jamaica Meets The Skatalites* (Moon Ska) Surviving members of the first ska band, The Skatalites, never stopped performing after their 1965 breakup. Here's proof, in this label's second traditional Jamaican ska offering in the series 'King Bravo Presents Ska Authentic'. The tracks feature ultra-powerful baselines by the talented Lloyd Brevett, so listeners who might have previously limited their diets to third-wave ska offerings can tape their feet or skank while they catch up with their musical roots. As for the singing, Doreen Shaeffer, the legend, assists with backing vocals while the lead goes to Tricia Grant, Miss Jamaica 1996, who is transcendently sweet on 'Wings Of A Dove'.

VOODOO GLOW SKULLS - *Baile de Los Locos (Dance of the Crazies)* (Epitaph, 2798 Sunset Blvd. Los Angeles CA 90026) I wonder if brothers Frank and Eddie Casillas knew what they were doing when they started recording. But I thank the deity for that they did it. Their latest recording pays tribute to Cinco de Mayo, the Mexican May 5 holiday celebrating a victory battle against French forces. There's also a surprise 25th track celebrating one holiday yet to come. Look for it. This ska-hardcore music sometimes approaches a machinegun-like delivery. When the salsa boils to the Skulls' surface, some trombone, trumpet and saxophone solos appear as in *los hombres no lloran*. Some ska fans roll their eyes when listening to the Skulls, because of the hardcore base upon which they build their music. Sometimes it can be an acquired taste. Their loyal following testify that it's worth acquiring.

COMPILATIONS

SKA: THE THIRD WAVE VOLUME 1 (Beloved Recordings, 318 East 34 St., 6th Floor 10016-4946) Many of the people who made you listen to ska recently are here, including the Dance Hall Crashers, The Scofflaws and The Toasters. The recording opens with Mephiskapheles magnificent *Doomsday* and they return with great horn solos in *Saba*. The comp. includes the legendary *William Shatner* by The Scofflaws and a solo offering by that group's Buford O'Sullivan in *I Gotta Do It (Someday)*. There's tight punk-ska with *Too Stupid* by Mustard Plug. The Insteps stop the recording for only 2:44 while they tell the story of *Shotgun Jimmy*, a fine performance of a fine composition.

SKA DOWN HER WAY: WOMEN OF SKA (Shanachie) This amazing collection creeps up on listeners with heavyweight entries, up-and-comings, and some you might not be familiar with - all with women at the microphone. I was almost surprised to see the Jinkies here, whose members, ages 17-35, always seem to be performing. But they got into a studio and applied their dual-female vocals here to *Give It Up*. There's Bim Skala Bim with Jackie Starr, Skankin' Pickle with Lynette Knackstedt and the very first ska stars, The Skatalites with Doreen Shaeffer. Ms. Shaeffer returns to stylize *Our Day Will Come* with The Slackers. The Checkered Cabs have a fine, soulful selection with *Darling Boy*. In a coup, this comp. kicks off with Cocktailica's Donna Lupie singing the Cycle Sluts From Hell's *I Wish You Were A Beer* for the SKAndalous All-Stars, with members of Mephiskapheles, The Skatalites, Living Colour, Ruder Than You and The Slackers, among others. The most enigmatic selection is from Fishbone with Lisa R. Grant leading on *Lyin' Ass Bitch*. This

Straight Outta Tokyo



"fighting fists, angry soul
never lose my fighting fists
my dear punks, angry boys
never lose your fighting fists"
Hi-Standard



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piece is at once a traditional work, then acts like it might turn into circus ska or a Broadway tune without a show, and finally reveals itself as a ska-choral-symphony tornadoed into a 4:15 song. Wow!

SKANKAHOLICS UNANIMOUS: UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF SKA (Moon Ska) Many treats to be found among this 20-track collection of ska drinking songs and drinking songs woven into ska. The New York Ska-Jazz Ensemble featuring Steve Pietaster does a driving, jazzing *More Whiskey*. Laurel Aitkin is there with *Hey Bartender*. Archivists should note selections are here by The Porkers, Lower East Side Buck, Skavovooie & the Epitones and a fine time of fun from Bad Manners. Some especially notable musical gems among many: Easy Big Fella with a steadily driving *Asleep At The Bar* that is fueled with banjo; The Allstonians' *Martinis For Two* explodes with Caribbean musical soul that transcends requirements of even legendary drinking songs; and The Pietasters' *Gin & Tonic* is a smooth, rhythmic work that isn't too cool to have soul.

ZINES

TROUBLE BOUND #6 (8334 Alden Road, Lenexa KS 66215, \$2) Phil Kellum puts out a full-size publication with lots of band interviews, a galaxy of record reviews and one page set aside in this issue for a comic satirizing racists. This issue also treats readers to an interview with the baritone sax player for Royal Crown Revue -- the band in the movie 'The Mask' -- along with coverage of the Cherry Poppin' Daddies, The Suicide Machines, The Specials and The Skunks. There's gossip about the bands and a couple of personal reflections that top off his info. filled publication.

SHALLOW END #3 (c/o Marc, PO Box 234, Manhattan KS 66505, \$1 plus stamp) This may be a quarter-size zine, but Marc, the publisher, has stuffed it full of news, interviews and reviews. His

interview with members of Less Than Jake explores the origin of the band and its name -- I always assumed they played upon the rock band Better Than Ezra, but that's wrong -- and explains the inspiration for songs like *Jen* and *Jonny Quest*. Most impressive is the interview with Australian ska-core artists, The Porkers. Other coverage includes The Rudiments, Voodoo Glow Skulls, The Independents and several up-and-coming bands. Marc makes his zine go a long way.

THE PEOPLE'S SKA ANNUAL #4 (c/o Noah Wildman, PO Box 1418, NYC NY 10276, large SASE plus two first class stamps) There's lots of reasons to grab this sharp, half-size, three-color newsprint zine published by this self-proclaimed "over-opinionated, close-cropped fan." My first reason is the one page history lesson in Noah's *Jamaican Music Map*, which is a wonderful flow chart tracing ska and its children, beginning with its birth from its musical parent, mento, in 1961, through today. The next is an uncensored, uncut interview with England's Judge Dread, who helped develop the ska we have today and relates his personal experiences with the music and personalities in all three waves. It's a lengthy article, but you'll find you can't get too much of Judge Dread. Wildman's opinions range from challenging and engaging to hilarious, as do the articles. One, *So You Want To Be A Rude Boy?* questions the roots of rudeness in several ways, including interviewing The Skatalites founder Tommy McCook about the original rude ones. There's much more in this fine-reading, good-looking zine.

Send records, zines and other items for review either to Jersey Beat or directly to: Chuck X, 11922 Westheimer Road Box 368, Houston TX 77077. You can send e-mail to ChuckX@HotMail.Com.

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Great Googly Moogly, Sapphire, is it that time again all ready? Well, it looks like it is, so let me shake off the haze and be a good host and welcome all you losers back to this little den of depravity known from here forward (and backward or sideways...I'm very open-minded) as GARAGE DISEASE. I'm not one to waste time gettin' to the gettin', so let's get REAL REAL GONE!!!

Something's going on down Georgia way these days. Three of my (current) fave raves are by Georgia bands, something for which I have no explanation. The first is THE SUBSONICS, who's Velvet Underground-meet-The Cramps rip-snorter is not to be missed (they have a fairly recent slab on Get Hip!, but I've already reviewed it here, so just trust me and go buy it).

Though they claim to be from somewhere in outer space, MAN...OR ASTROMAN? are really denizens of the State of Georgia, but you would never suspect it by listening to their latest release for Touch & Go, "1000X". Not their strongest release to date, but I'm still trying to get used to it. More and more vocals are starting to creep in and there is just something different in the overall sound of the band. At times, they remind me (though vaguely, I could still hear it) of Sonic Youth. Take that for what it's worth. This is still a great record, but don't pick it up expecting to hear the same ol' M.O.A? Pressed on 10 inch vinyl (much cooler than the CD, no matter what you technophiles say) and on CD (it takes all kinds...but I will say the CD packaging is way cool).

But my favorite band right now, hailing from Cabbagetown, Georgia, is THE ROCK*A*TEENS. Their new one, "CRY" (Daemon Records) has taken up near-permanent residence in the carousel of my CD player since it came to live with me. Played through hollow bodies and heavy on the reverb (which, by the way, is the key to the city in my book), this album has to be experienced to be believed. They just don't seem to put songs together like most other bands, and I'm a big fan of innovation. There is something different about these guys, though I quite put my finger on what that is. But whatever it is, it's good. All the talk in the world can't tell you what it sounds like, so just track it down and take it home. And don't ever miss a chance to catch these guys do their thing live!

Our old friends at Get Hip! never disappoint, and this time 'round is no exception! Hell, you should all thank the deity of your choosing for labels like Get Hip! that bring this stuff to our ears, stuff that we would almost likely never hear if these gone dads hadn't gone digging and come up with the proverbial grail(s). And this round of stuff is no exception. But of all the stuff I got my grubby mitts on, one of the coolest is their ARCHIVE SERIES, featuring lotsa great Midwestern trash that would have never seen the light of day without 'em! Like "THE BEST OF IGL", two records featuring folk and garage stuff from the Iowa Great Lakes label out of Milford, Iowa. Most of this stuff comes from the "golden years" of 1965-68, which saw bands like The Continental Coets (all-girl punk!), The Senders (who do an incredible take of "Sometimes Good Guys Don't Wear White"), Billy Rat and The Finks, Dale and The Devonaires, The Torres and Dark Knights lay their thang to vinyl. IGL also released an LP that became one of the most sought after LP's of the era, a folk rock masterpiece by STEVE ELLIS AND THE STARFIRES. Practically unreleased (out of a reported 500 pressed, only 80 were issued), here is a piece of vinyl so rare I never suspected I would ever hear it. An homage to Steve Ellis (who was killed when the valve stem on the back tire of the motorcycle he was riding blew), this record compiles all of the band's recorded output, as well as his bandmates talking about Ellis and his music. The music is the amazing part of this record, and should be grabbed up for this alone. Another Midwestern label that had more than its share of garage "hits" was the Scotty label outta Excelsior, Minnesota, and probably the best band outta the bunch was THE ELEKTRAS (who recorded the scorcher, "Dirty Old Man"), which are featured heavily on the BEST OF SCOTTY. Also included are tracks by THE SCOTSMEN and THE VICTORS, all of which are required reading for the



discriminating. Like before, this is an LP only release.

Beginning in 1959, a group of Motor City teenagers calling themselves THUNDER ROCKS began laying down some of the hottest sax-driven instro platters to ever lay waste to a dance floor, and here are all their eggs collected in one basket called ON THE RAM-PAGE. These are fine examples of that Motown scorch and it is hot!! Only the city that produced the GTO and The Fury could produce such boss tuneage...

It would be inexcusable for any self-respecting fan of garage rock not to own these essential documents. Bill Elm, a former member of both Giant Sand and Naked Prey, found a couple of Santo & Johnny LPs (y'know, the steel-guitar based outfit that did "Sleepwalk"? back in '59 or so) in a record store while on a trip to Austin, and after dropping a hit of acid, went head over heels for the sound, and put together his new outfit (made up of past and present members of Giant Sand and Naked Prey), FRIENDS OF DEAN MARTINEZ. Their new collection for SubPop, "RETROGRADE", shows the S&J influence and more! Take an entire package of Ennio Morricone, a serving of Martin Denny, a dash of Ventures (you can use almost any surf group here. I chose them as a familiar point of reference) and a heaping spoonful of Angelo Badalamenti and throw 'em out in the middle of nowhere in Arizona or New Mexico or somewhere hot and dusty. Bill Elm's steel guitar plays the part of vocalist in this all instro combo, and in the process, almost steals the show from the rest of the guys. And this album will really play havoc with your moods, to. When I first heard it, I was toking up on a little greenery and looking out my bedroom window, watching the rain fall outside. I felt sad, lonely, desperate...But the next day, listening while driving with the hot sun beating down on me, I felt more alive than I had felt in awhile. Like I wanted to hit the open road and never look back...And even in one sitting, it can take you from sad to happy to scared...A fine record it is indeed.

From Jeff Dahl and Ultra Under Records comes their new collection, TRASH ON DEMAND, vol.II. Like the first volume, every one of the 23 tracks fuckin' rocks. And we run the gamut here, from punk to pop to glam to garage and trash blues- from all corners of the world and all rare or unreleased. We have tracks from Assassination Bureau, The Leaving Trains, The Jezebelles, Hot Damn!, The Trash Brats, The Jacobites, The Cynics and a whole lot more. Too many to list, but not a bad banana in the bunch. The only thing I wasn't happy about was the fact that this is a CD-only release. Volume one was

vinyl only, and I would have preferred this one to be on vinyl as well, but hey, the music's good. I suggest you try to get this one ASAP..It's limited to 1000 copies and I have two, so there are only 998 others out there. Grab it while you can. Don't come cryin' to me, beggin' for my second copy...

Well, it's about goddamn time! After nearly wearing a hole through my single, Texas R&B'ers THE DROPOUTS, finally have a new foot longer, "COME ON!", out on San Antonio's Unclean Records. Full tilt sloppo screamin' R&B, like THEM on bad hooch and bathtub crank. Never let's up from top to bottom. I have been strung out on these guys since I got a hold of their last single on Unclean, and I needed a new fix, and boy did I get it. Produced with the know-how of ex-Raunch Hand Senor Mike Mariconda, this baby is like a jet engine in your ears. This thing'll kick you and your sister's ass, so be careful where you open tear it open. It ain't for the faint of heart or the weak of will.

Oh yeah, before I forget, I want to thank those kind folks at WRAS in Atlanta for extending their hospitality and giving me the opportunity to come hang out at their benefit show (which by the way, had an amazing line-up, featuring the likes of The Hate Bombs, Mondo Topless, and many others, including Man..Or Monoman? which was Man..or Astroman? fronted by one of our most revered deities, Mr Jeff Connolly). Unfortunately, I was unable to attend due to a foot and half of water deciding to take a detour through my basement and destroying 211 albums, and close to that number of 45's, books and videos in the process. But I still wanted to say thanks, so "Thanks!!", and I mean that from the bottom of my little black heart.

Any bands interested in interviews or getting stuff reviewed should rop me a line here at GARAGE DISEASE c/o DAVID BROCK 1000 HICKORY HOLLOW RD., NASHVILLE, TN 37221, or email me at

eternolux@hotmail.com. If you want to send love letters or death threats, that's cool too....Well, it's time to get outta here once again. I ain't wastin' no more of your time, and I ain't wastin' no more of my time, so all I gotta say is I'll see ya next time 'round. So until I'm forced to do this all over, "May The Good Lord Take A Likin' To Ya, and Blow You Up REEEEEEL GOOD!!!

Label Addresses

Get Hip! Records PO Box 666, Canonsburg, PA 15317
The Rock*A*Teens 711 Wylie St., Cabbagetown, GA 30316
SubPop Records PO Box 20645, Seattle, WA 98102
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Punk Rock? So fucking what! It's been an ongoing discussion for the last three or four years now, and quite frankly, I'm tired of it. Not the music, oh no. I'm referring to all the hype regarding *Punk Planet* v. *Maximumrocknroll*, Furious George v. Larry Livermore, Screeching Weasel v. Lookout! Records, chain wallets v. nipple rings, Epitaph v. major label distribution, etc etc. The list goes on and on. But instead of contributing to all the unnecessary nonsense (cause that's all it really is), I've decided to make a list of all the reasons I love punk rock. So, with out further ado, here's what starts my day and keeps me running.

1. The music. I'm 21, and I still haven't found anything remotely close to the emotional, influential, and lasting effect punk music has had on me.
2. Seeing punk shows at clubs and only being 16.
3. The fact that, if there's no place to do a show, just put one on in your basement, garage, or living room.
4. Dancing my ass off like a child to five bands while only spending five bucks the entire night.
5. Being able to learn and play a punk tune on my guitar within minutes.
6. Making me believe in love again.
7. Having getting dumped be a positive thing for writing an album's worth of songs.
8. Punk: be it fast, slow, folksy, funky, rocky, loud, soft, emotional, charming, noisy, energetic, straight, messy, whatever...it's all good rock-n-roll.
9. The fact that my parents still don't have a clue as to what being independent in the music scene is all about.
10. Going to shows to kill the boredom of most weekends.
11. Seeing a youngster trip over his own baggy-skater pants.
12. Using a fanzine as a device to walk up and talk to girls. (hahaha)
13. Booking a tour entirely all ages and meeting rad fucking people
14. Going on tour and not having to worry about finding places to stay.
15. Meeting a diverse group of lunatics like myself and becoming good friends.
16. Making your own records, t-shirts, and patches.
17. Starting a fanzine all on your own and having it turn into something more than you ever imagined.
18. Getting money from record labels for ads.
19. Having major labels pay four times your ad rates.
20. Having a song mean so much more than what's printed on the insert.
21. Driving in your car, listening to punk tunes, while tapping and singing out loud.
22. Losing yourself in a song.
23. Being inspired.
24. Smiling, crying...all that heartfelt emotional crap.
25. Falling in love with the music.
26. Falling in love with someone while listening to music.
27. Making love to someone while listening to punk music. (Note: this can also be a con, so be careful).
28. Having music be accessible, inexpensive, and abundant.
29. Listening to a band and knowing them personally.
30. Having your talents on a CD or record.
31. Being able to make a complete ass out of yourself and have people love you for it.
32. Going to a show and releasing all tensions, worries, and anxieties.
33. Just letting go and living out your youth.
34. Being able to schmooze off of corporate rock/major labels.
35. Being encouraged to copy records for friends.
36. Making the almighty mix-tape.

37. Being able to spread information via zines, email, websites, etc.
38. Having your parents worry when you're only going to see Discount.
39. Telling your parents you're going to church to see a punk show and having it be true.
40. Going to Denny's with band members after a show.
41. Being 21 and going to a show with a 31-year-old (and having a great time).
42. Playing shows for weddings, sixth-grade graduations, and pool parties.
43. Just being able to believe in something.

Whether it's Green Day or Elvis Costello, Nirvana or Propagandhi,



Beastie Boys or The Ramones, Operation Ivy or Weezer, it's all punk rock and it's all about the music. The roots trace back to the fact that it makes you feel something. Whether it's dancing like a fool or starting a zine, it's all good.

Since last issue:

Playlist: I.D.K., Weezer, Ben Lee, Karate, Frank Sinatra, Jack Drag, Plow United, The Figgs, Archers of Loaf, The Rentals, Wilco, J Church, Beatles, Discount, plus lots and lots of Latin music.

Films: Swingers and Chasing Amy. If you haven't seen either one of those movies, I feel sorry for you. Plus some older flicks that deserve recognition, The Godfather (first two), Say Anything, Before Sunrise, 1984, Star Wars, Lost Highway, True Romance, and Grease.

Dave Thirsty

<http://www.ithaca.edu/shp/shp98/dbrown4>



Greetings and Salutations! As I write this summer is upon us in a big way and it would seem that Garage music is in as healthy a state here in NYC as it's ever been. There've been some cool shows around town lately, some really incredible out-of-town festivals comin' up, and lots of cool new records and discs. One of the best of the newer releases has got to be the debut CD by **The Dropouts** - *Come On!* on Unclean Records. Produced by former Raunch Hand Mike Mariconda, this is pure snotty Punk Rock with an extra dose of R&B thrown in for good measure. As I listen to this for the second time tonight, songs like "Bye Bye Baby", "I'm A Dog", "Bad Luck Cat" and the title track seem to jump right out of the speakers and grab anyone within listening distance by the throat. I can just imagine these guys playing in some seedy dive in the middle of nowhere, getting drunk and totally rockin' the house down. If you're into stuff like the first 3 Stones albums or any of those British Freakbeat comps, you won't want to miss out on this.

Perhaps it's kinda unfair for me to review the new **Insomniacs** disc *Out of It* on Estrus Records, seeing as how these guys are all pals of mine and also as how I must have seen them play live at least 30 times over the last 5 or 6 years. Well, too bad as there's no way I can write a column on cool Garage bands and not rave about one of the best albums of '97. Unlike many of the other bands on the scene today, these guys are more influenced by some of the British Mod bands of the 60s such as The Creation and The (pre-Tommy) Who than they are by the US garage combos of the same time. While they've always had lotsa really great songs, in the past they've sometimes not quite captured them at their best on record. Compare the version of "Sylvia Gray" on here with the one they released as a single last year and you'll see what I mean. This new version is just so much punchier. Other favorites include "Crystal Clear", "Don't Turn Away", "Jump and Dance" (a cover but I don't remember who did the original) and "Love Me To Death" but there's absolutely nothing on here that ain't a winner. Buy the disc and, next time they play, go see 'em. It's bands like them that keep this middle-aged curmudgeon feeling like a teenager after all these years.

Although it's been close to a year since they played CBGBs, I still have fond memories of **The Hate Bombs** incredibly powerful set. While I had heard one or two 45s by those guys prior to that, I just wasn't expecting that level of energy and drive. 360 Twist Records has just released their debut CD *Here Comes Treble* and it's everything I could have hoped for and more. Every song on here is a total blast and throughout these 16 songs (tho only 15 are listed on the back), 14 originals plus remakes of "That's Cool That's Trash" and "Going All The Way" there's barely a moment to catch your breath. If you like garage punk music with a real raw and primitive edge to it, this is one disc you won't want to live without.

Also on 360 Twist is the new mini-disc by **The Element 79**, "Dig Out With...", and it's definitely another sure winner from this relatively new label out of Colorado. These

put this one off until next time but, after one listen, I realized that I had to get the word out now. **Mockers...** is their second disc and it finds them in a bit more of a power pop mode than their first, which kinda stuck to a punkier sound, though that's not to say that they don't cut loose on more than one or two occasions. Songs like "Soul Kiss" and "You Could Lose Yourself" are both catchy and danceable and will definitely be on my next party tape. Lead vocalist Eileen Ziontz has been compared to Debbie Harry but, to these ears, she exudes a lot more warmth and emotion than DH ever has and she certainly gets the most out of it here. One of my favorite tracks is "Ocean Eyes", a ballad where she croons ever so softly, conjuring up dual images of loss and serenity and it's incredibly moving. Other favorites include "Pretty Things Are Unfair" which reminds me of some of those incredibly

wonderful garage pop tunes from the first Muffs album, "Junior High Knock-out", a absolutely delectable slice of bouncy bubble-gum, despite the angry edge to the lyrics and "I'm Dropping Out", a flat out rocker. In all there are 17 tracks on here and while some are better than others, none of 'em could ever be described as filler. The Botswanas have become one of the best bands around but, until now, have never generated the popularity they deserve. This CD should remedy that situation toot sweet.

Leave it to those folks at Norton Records to keep coming up with pure gems

from Rock & Roll's illustrious past. No, I don't mean 'oldies' but rather just earthy, primitive, heartfelt R&R with little or no 'commercial potential'. This time around they've unearthed a dozen vintage tracks by **Dale Hawkins** and friends that really must be heard to be believed. Admittedly, the sound on most of these nuggets is kinda rough, seeing as how they were taken from crude, scratchy 40+ year-old acetates, but unlike many of today's young 'artistes' who go into the studio with the intention of deliberately making a record that sounds as shitty as possible, these sound as if they were recorded on some cheap old reel-to-reel in some makeshift studio out in the back woods somewhere. While I definitely dig it all, my personal favorites are the instrumental "Daredevil", a rompin' version of Tarheel Slim's "Number Nine Train" and



guys remind me a bit more of some of the classic mid-80s garage bands like The Chesterfield Kings or the (early) Miracle Workers, with their slightly more Eurobeat/R&B approach and snarly vocals. Although I really like all 8 songs on here, my two favorites are "Same Old Thing", two-minutes plus of spite and bile that's just perfect to blast out at top volume after a shitty day at work and "Walk On By", just the thing to get everyone up and out on the dance floor. I missed these guys when they came around last year and, judging from what I'm hearing now, I must've missed one helluva show.

As I was doing the final editing to this column, I managed to snag a copy of the new **Botswanas** CD *Mockers and Rods* on their own Feralette Records. Being the kind of lazy soul that I am, I was planning to

an early demo of "Suzie Q". While this might not be to everyone's tastes, if you like bare-boned, no-bullshit Rock & Roll, this will definitely more than fit the bill.

Like many of the other bands on Twist Records, **The Nuthins** take their inspiration from such mid-60s Punk icons as The Standells, Chocolate Watchband, Shadows of Knight etc. etc. and their new vinyl-only LP, the somewhat ironically titled *One Step Forward* (avail. in the US through Get Hip) is an unexpected treat for all of us dyed-in-the-wool garage heads. These guys put all the right pieces in all the right places - the snotty-voiced lead singer, the rich lush organ chords, the chiming guitars, the occasional wailing harp and, if the songs (12 originals plus a remake of "Hey Joe" and The Barbarians' "Are You A Boy Or A Girl") are a trifle on the generic side, they're still well written and quite enjoyable. While I don't think that this album is going to have a very wide-spread appeal, if, like me, you still listen to those old "Back From The Grave" and "Pebbles" comps, this will make you very happy.

As anyone who saw me in my buying frenzy at the last WFMU Record Fair knows, I've really been getting back into collecting 45s. While LPs and CDs are fine and dandy, there's a certain immediacy about a 7-inch single that other formats just can't match. Perhaps it's the fact that the artist knows that he or she has to shoot their best shot in 3 minutes or less and then it's on to something else that gives them that little extra shot but whatever it is, it

would seem that there's definitely something magic about those little buggers. Here are some of the best from the last few months....For the last 5 years I've been singing the praises of **Jalla Jalla** (which supposedly means 'faster faster' in Turkish), one of Finland's top Punk & Roll combos, to anyone who'd listen, Their 3 albums (the first 2 of which are available in the US on one CD courtesy of NKVD Records) are all among my Top 30 albums of the last 5 years. Their singer sounds like a less whiny Graham Parker while the band provides the perfect hard-edged backup that really gets the songs across. Twang! Records has just released a new 45 "Hospital Waltz" (from their 3rd album) backed with a punked-out version of The Rubettes' "Juke Box Jive" and both sides are absolute stunners. Their music has always had just the right combination of catchy hooks and flat out ballsiness and this is the perfect place to discover one of the top unknown bands of the 90's...Sounding like they've definitely learned a trick or three from Mr. Billy Childish, the latest 4-song EP by **The Hi-Balls** on Regent Records has become a turntable favorite here at Platterpuss HQ lately. While the production maintains that ever so chic muddiness that's so popular these days, there's still more than enough oomph left to really bring these R&B flavoured garage rockers across in a big way. This is a true 4-out-of-4 winner and I hope that it's just the beginning from these guys...I was a bit taken aback when I first played **The Cheeks'** "Kim" EP on Radio Blast Records.

The cover is a takeoff of an old Booker T & The MGs album and I was expecting something with a bit more of a mod or soul influence. But instead what I got were 3 great big blasts of sing-alongable melodic punk. Luckily, the songs are all absolute aces so it only took me a second or two to shift gears and get into the proper spirit. And now I have something to play while I wait (im)patiently for the new Vacant Lot album...The lead singer of **The Loons** has got to have one of the most nasal voices ever to grace vinyl but that won't stop me from totally diggin' the shit out of their new 45 "Unwind"/"Slow Knife" on 360 Twist. "...Knife" is a slower moodier kinda thing that didn't grab me until I spun it a couple of times but "Unwind" is a nifty little danceable number with some nice fuzz guitar and a contagious "Let's have some fun" type attitude...One of the best garage bands on the scene today has got to be **Fortune & Maltese** and **The Phabulous Pallbearers**. Like Untamed Youth, these guys have got that whole wild and drunken mid-60s Frat Rock thing down to a 'T' complete with lots of wonderfully cheesy organ playing that I'm a total sucker for. Last issue I raved about their album and now they've got a new single on 360 Twist "Genie In The Lamp"/"Vampira", two more heapin' slabs of mindless danceable fun that anyone who's into cool R&R has just gotta own...Rounding out the 360 Twist section of this column is the new one by **The Let Downs**, "Atlanta"/"Flash & Crash", yet 2 more variations on the old 1-4-5 3-chord "Louie Louie" riff. Not

mil mulliganos

"...the best new band in Syracuse..."

-the Flashing Astonisher

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tht I'm complaining as these guys have definitely got that extra helping of enthusiasm that it takes to make it all sound fresh and exciting. As far as I know this is their first record but I do hope that there's more where this came from.

Over the last few years **Sit 'N' Spin** have become popular favorites on the NY/NJ garage scene. At their best they combine a sense of silliness with just a touch of bitchiness, giving them their own unique sensibility. Their latest 45 on Solamente Records "Primate Mixer Party" backed with a cover of Chuck Berry's "30 Days" is a whole lotta fun and the perfect intro to this fine combo if you're not already a fan... Untamed Youth fans will definitely want to check out the latest Deke Dickerson involvement, **The Sprague Brothers'** "Battle of The Bands"/"Green Arrow" on Hillsdale Records. The flip is a surf instro thing, nice enough if nothing all that special but "Battle of The Bands" is another thing entirely, an ode to days long gone, in an early Beach Boys (pre-falsetto) surf vocal style. I'm not sure if that's Deke doin' the croonin' but it really doesn't matter too much as this is one catchy as hell little platter...Speaking of **Untamed Youth**, I would be remiss in my duties if I didn't mention their new 45 on Norton Records "Go Girl Go"/"Hot Lips Baby". I especially dig the B-side, a totally revved-up and supercharged version of the old Herbie Duncan chestnut that never fails to get me up and dancing around my room, despite the 90 degree-plus temperature. And, as a little extra bonus, check out that hilarious picture on the back cover...Also out on Norton is the **Hentchmen's** "Red River Rock"/"Why Did God Make Girls". The A-side is a punked-up version of the Johmmy & The Hurricanes hit from 1959 while the flip (an original?) is more of a garage stomper. Both sides are A-1 party liven-uppers and definitely recommended...For those of you who just can't get enough of those Hentchmen, there's the "Rainin' In My Heart" EP on Larsens. 2 of the 3 songs, including the Slim Harpo remake title track, are ballads that don't really get me all that gone but the third song "Girl From Jackson" is a rompin' stompin' joy to behold and definitely stands as one of their best. I don't know if anyone distributes this label here in the U.S. so you may have to write away for this one but, if you're a fan of the band, it's definitely worth the effort...Two of today's better poppy punk bands, **The Bomb Bassets** and **The McCrackins** have a new 4-song split EP on G.I. Productions and anyone who's a fan of the whole white-bread-and-bubblegum played at breakneck speeds kinda thing (and you know who you are), will want to waste no time scoring a copy. Although all 4 songs are quite fine, I especially dig the BB's "Superwoman" which, in a more perfect world, would have 'hit' written all over it...In addition to their fine fine superfine CD (reviewed by yours truly a page or two previously) **The Hate Bombs** also have this really cool new 3-song EP on their own Speed-O-Meter records. The A-side is a ferocious stomper called "One Thing On My Mind" (also on the CD) and is easily one of the best things these guys have ever recorded, but the 2 songs on the flip, another original plus a savage remake of We The Peoples' "My Brother The Man" are also must-haves.

Although they might hate me for saying this, on their latest EP "Talent Is A Crime" on Royal Records, **The No Talents** really do show a great deal of that dreaded 'T' word, as all 3 songs here are quite well played and rather catchy in a trashy 5-6-7-8's kinda way. As on their album, most of the songs here are kinda short (as in under 1:30), never giving you a chance to really sink your teeth into 'em. So, even though this may not quite be it, I just know that somewhere down the line they're gonna come up with a absolute stone killer...Being the fan of classic 60s style garage, complete with snarly, snotty vocals and lots of cool organ playing that I am, I really love **The Mourning After's** single "Diggin' Your Own Grave"/"Glad I Came on Twist Records. Though both sides are aces, I think, as I play this thing again and again, that I prefer the B-side as it's got just a hint of a psych edge to it, making it sound like something tht would've fit in perfectly on the "Austin Powers" soundtrack...It's always a special occasion for me whenever there's a new **Pansy Division** record. Not only do they have one of the best poppy punk sounds around but, with Rock & Roll being the hetero-dominated genre that it is, it's refreshing for those of us in the minority, to hear



Steve 'Nitti' Bahr, The Blisters

a different perspective. Their new "Manada" EP on Mint Records is another gem, featuring 2 versions of the title track plus "Hockey Hair", a new song that they played at Brownies when I saw them there this past Spring...**The Blisters** have never really gotten their due as one of the better melodic Punk & Roll bands around and, to tell you the truth, until I got their new self-released "Storch" EP, I thought that they had disbanded. After spinning it a few times, I'm damn glad that they're still with us as this is some of their best stuff yet. The A-side "Teenage Flower" clocks in at 4-minutes plus and does start to lose a bit of its focus after awhile but the 2 songs on the flip "Laughing At You" and "Five To Nine" are hooky, hard-hitting and concise, reminding me of some of the early Real Kids better songs. Welcome back guys.

Well, that's about it for this go-round. I hope you found a few things in here that piqued your interest enough to check out further. If anyone has any comments, questions or whatever, I can be reached at plattruss@aol.com. See ya next time.

Label Addresses:

- 360 Twist, PO Box 9367, Denver CO 80209
- ✓ The Blisters, 30 Carson Ave., Metuchen NJ 08840
- Estrus, PO Box 2125, Bellingham WA 98227
- Ferallette, West Village Post Office, PO Box 20129, NYC NY 10014-0129
- G.I. Production, PO Box 6948, San Diego CA 95150-6948
- Hillsdale, PO Box 641592, San Francisco CA 94164
- Larsen, 116 Rue du Crey, 73230 St. Alban Laysse, FRANCE
- Mint, PO Box 3613 MPO, Vancouver BC, CANADA V6B 3Y6
- NKVD, PO Box 60369, San Diego CA 92166
- Norton, PO Box 646, Cooper Station, NYC NY 10003
- Radio Blast, Buchenstr. 18 B, 40599 Dusseldorf, GERMANY
- Regent, 532 Pacific St. #12, Brooklyn NY 11217
- Royal, 7 Rue Tholozé, 75018 Paris, FRANCE
- Solamente, #2-124 St. Marks Place, Brooklyn NY 11217-2015
- Speed-O-Meter, 1430 Lake Highland Drive, Orlando FL 32803
- Twang!, PO Box 41 03 11, 12113 Berlin, GERMANY
- Twist, c/o Mark Le Gallez, Old Trafford, Jerbourg Rd, St. Martin, Guernsey C.I., UK

deconstruction

by Gregory S. Malherly

Welcome to deconstruction and another look into the latest in experimental and nontraditional music, where I, your gracious host, commit blasphemy by converting really good music into a series of identifying words and phrases. This heinous act, however, is for your benefit and convenience. After reading this column you will be able to adopt preconceived ideas about the following artists and their music; ideas and views that you can use as your own in referring these works to others and personal opinions that can shape the way you approach your listening experience, and how you will eventually come to define it. So sit back and enjoy – after a few close reads there won't be any need to listen for yourself. On with the word.

A long time ago in a castle in Germany, there recorded a band whose name was **Can**. In 1969, **Can** melded avant-garde (non)sensibility and psychedelic rock . . . the outcome of which was nothing short of evolutionary genius. **Can**'s spacey rock-n-roll was littered with tape loops and various other sorts of electronic collage effects. Their influence flows deep and wide; crossing genres and artistic altitudes faster than David Bowie. So with all the audio pastiche piling up at the end of the century, why isn't **Can** a household name? Well, now they are. Mute Records has released a double CD homage to those legendary astrokrauts. When a tribute album must humble itself to the point of being titled *Sacrilege*, you know the guests of honor were incredibly influential. *Sacrilege* is a collection of remixed **Can** tracks by the likes of Brian Eno, Sonic Youth, The Orb, Pete Shelley, Carl Craig, and System 7, just to list a few. A great addition to your **CAN** collection and/or a handy place to start mapping your roots. It's about Time, isn't it?

Boy, that Jud Ehrbar sure is a busy fellow. When he's not recording and touring with the emotionally supercharged Varnaline, or the holy, cerebral Space Needle, Jud's time is spent on his solo project, **Reservoir**. The latest **Reservoir** album, *Pink Machine* (Zero Hour), is an escape from the drone-friendly sound that Jud cultivated on last year's self-titled release. *Pink Machine* has an undeniable 70's slow pop flair organically growing from a heavy synthesis of electronic effects. To this union of recycled

tones and modern compositional skills Jud adds beautiful, ironic verse that shares both emotional empathy and lucid, abstract constructions. On "Let's Fall In Love Again," Ehrbar sings, "My love for you is like a building standing tall up against the sky/ sometimes I just want to tear it down so we remember why we care. . . ." Themes of loss and the problematic situations of love crop up more than once on *Pink Machine*, but there always seems to be a much stronger optimism that shines through. This optimism is achieved musically by Jud's exaggerated, vintage sound and the campy manner in which it is organized, and generally by Ehrbar's cosmic pragmatism. *Pink Machine* is a mature album. A kind of mature album that sounds as though it were recorded in a toy store. <http://www.zerohour.com>



The latest composition by **Phillip Glass** is a new variation on the experimental work that was produced by David Bowie and Brian Eno in the late '70's. Building from Bowie and Eno's conceptual themes established during Bowie's "Heroes" era, The "*Heroes*" *Symphony* (Point Music) paints a perspective that exposes the importance and relevance of these groundbreaking achievements made in the world of audio art. As with 1993's "Low" *Symphony*, Glass takes Bowie and Eno's eclectic blend of rock-n-roll and the avant-garde and transports its seedlings to the late '90's to be born through a full orchestra (The American Composers Orchestra), and a different set of eyes. What adds to the immense power of this album is the curiosity that somehow, Glass manages to create a work that is wholly original while remaining honest to the foundations first set by the dynamic duo. Further expansion on these important classics is made by dance choreographer Twyla Tharp, who first approached Glass with the idea for the "*Heroes*" *Symphony*. A touring production of Tharp's, "*Heroes*" made its way through the States back in early Spring, which introduced Glass' new work and displayed the heartfelt beauty that threads its way through the piece. The "*Heroes*" *Symphony* captures an evolution of passion in many of its relative facets; beauty, pain, freedom, and anguish. A modern classic.

The Orb have a new collection of cerebral wavelengths in the marketplace. With *Orblivion* (Island), Alex and Co. offer 12 new quantum tracks that do not disappoint the traveler orbs terrarvm. In a sly blend that melds capitalism and commercialism with themes of an impending apocalypse, *Orblivion* conjures up ethereal landscapes and ambient beats that run the gamut of impressions and views toward the approaching turn of the century. Taking samples from Mike Leigh's 1993 noir/minimal film, *Naked*, "S.A.L.T." delivers an audio acknowledgment of biblical prophecy fulfilled, while the radio friendly, "Toxygene" provides salvation through a consistent dance rhythm and its felicitous keyboard accompaniment. The live *Orblivion* show is a glorious train ride through time. Projected images of the abstract and surreal, heavy sampling over the instrumentation, and a flood of curiously warm lighting all make for an evening of defamiliarization that is not soon forgotten. The *Orblivion* album and its missionary tour shouldn't be missed. <http://www.orblivion.com>

I nominate San Diego's Rob Crow and Pea Hix for the most unique instrument to appear on an album. **Optiganally Yours** is the first band to exploit the Optigan, an instrument made by Mattel back in the early '70's. The Optigan, from what I gather, is a chord organ whose function and design make it the grandfather of the sampler, only instead of recording your own samples, the preprogrammed sounds of guitar, keyboard, etc. are taken from optical discs within. On their debut album, *Spotlight On...* (Headhunter), these audio archeologists create a beautifully low-fi pop album using nothing more than their voice, their creativity, and the holy Optigan. These sounds are vintage! Not only do these pop delicacies sound as if they were recorded in a shag-carpeted, strawberry incense scented, orange love-machine (a 1970's van to you and me), but they also sound as if they were coming over an AM station. The future is in the past and the Louis and Clark of pop music are sailing away in their Optigan to retrieve it. It will be interesting to see if these guys continue their experimentation. How about a whistle-pop ensemble?

A little way down the dark highway. . .

Cheer-Accident are a group of musicians who utilize a vast array of traditional and nontraditional noise makers to produce foreboding flights into clarity. Their recent release, *Enduring The American Dream* (Pravda), is aptly titled for these 14 compositions could be considered the soundtrack music for bad dreams. **Cheer-Accident** pull a dark and fatalistic outlook from a chaotic collage of guitar, harmonium, synthesizer, vacuum cleaner, oboe, and piano, trombone, et al. Disjunctive and indeterminate, the unpredictability of **Cheer-Accident** enforces the relentless, futile symbol of the American dream. A brave, original experimentation. Not for the existentially depressed.

Japanese noise-master, Ishiro Tsuji is the driving force behind the immense cacophony of madness known as **Dissecting Table**. *Human Breeding* (Release), Tsuji's new 4-song CD, continues his progress in ballistic audio-evolution. When one mentions **Dissecting Table**, comparisons are, at once, incongruent and hard to avoid. Certain methods of composition echo Skinny Puppy, while the occasional rivers of solid white noise hark unto Merzbow and Masson. What really sets **Dissecting Table** apart from the likes of Skinny Puppy and fellow Japanese aggrophiles is the manner in which the themes are built through a particular piece. In conveying its messages of change, isolation, the natural union of pleasure and pain, and technological inhumanity, *Human Breeding* does not rely solely on the chaotic blistering of hot noise, nor does it sustain itself by imposing a rigid order. The originality of this album is in the combination of the two; the outcome of which renders each piece as a collection of images that are related, contrasted, or merely dissected. A fine release by one of the greats in the 'noise' genre. Well- balanced and intense; the perfect initiation for a new 'noise' convert. <http://www.relapse.com>

Grab your smoking jacket, slip yourself a mickey, and write your wife a postcard telling her to lock your daughter up -- New Wet Kojak have a new album out. *Nasty International* (Touch and Go), the follow-up to last year's self-titled debut, is as sexy and demented as a cheerleader in an opium den. Jazz is used to extract the subterranean vibes of the street creature and warped rock-n-roll tactics aid in further subverting the passions of these lounge artists on parole. There is something seriously wrong with these guys and I think it's very communicable. In "Cool Heart," Scott McCloud nonchalantly brags, "I'm getting happy. I'm getting slappy. Gotta cool heart." Even when I'm not sure what he's talking about, I know it's just full of bubbling, perverted decadence. Seedy to the last hidden track, *Nasty International* is the album to hear when you feel like giving it all away to a slow burning cigarette and a naked, lethargic haze. I feel dirty.

Richmond, Virginia's own masters of jazz, **Hotel X**, have just released their sixth album, *Routes Music* (SST). What really makes these guys stand out among today's jazz artists is their choice of instrumentation. Not only do **Hotel X** know how to make traditional jazz instruments submit to their streams of consciousness, they are versed and experienced in the powers of the sitar, didjeridoo, and the Bolivian flute. With their polyrhythmic, multi-personality improvisations, **Hotel X** seem to expand the primal essence of jazz to new heights and lower sub-levels. Very busy, no traffic jams: *Routes Music* is a must for aficionados of jazz experimentalism.

In Your Own Juices (Wagon Train Records) is the title of the new W.O.O. enhanced CD project. W.O.O. is a revolving outfit of improv musicians and word artists dishing up 'in your face' slabs of life and chunks of real-dripping art. Spoken word performers this time around are: John S. Hall (ex King Missile), Jennifer Blowdryer (SMUT Fest diva), David Huberman, et al., with musical accompaniment by Ray Sage (Reverb Motherfuckers), John Tanzer, and Bonnie Kane just to name a few. The multimedia portion of the disc is made for Macintosh systems only (those bastards). Git cher bibs, this is a spoken word buffet.

That's all for this issue. Address all comments, suggestions, considerations, praises, complaints, theories, questions, and answers to: *deconstruction* -- P.O. Box 2771, M.T.S.U., Murfreesboro, TN 37132. E-mail: drmathery@prodigy.com

"The volatile truth of our words should continually betray the inadequacy of the residual statement." --Thoreau

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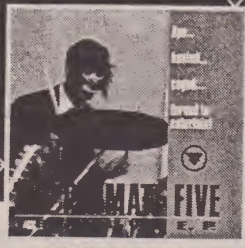
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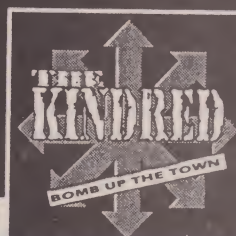
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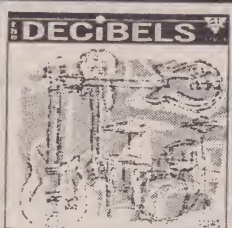
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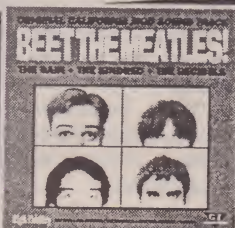
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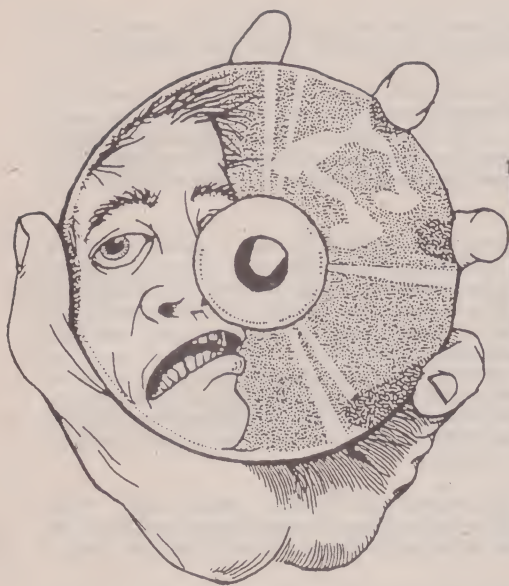
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Record Reviews

30 AMP FUSE - *Saturday Night At The Atomic Speedway* (Dedicated/BMG) Three Knoxville lads comin' at you with turbo-charged 90's power-pop anthems about girls, poser punks and, well, girls. If you dig the sounds of bands like The Meiges, Big Drill Car and Mother May I, then 30 Amp Fuse is right down your hooky-as-all-fuck alley. This CD rocks all the way through, not a clunker on it! So buy it, crank it up to 11 and jump around your room like you're three. - Rick K.

Pop punk that's more pop than punk. The singer's voice suits the music, which is catchy and driving. These guys don't push the envelope - they stuff the envelope like a much-anticipated letter from an old friend. Standouts include "Punk Virtuoso" and "I Fall Down." - Michael Chant

63 EYES (Zone 8 Records, PO Box 549, Granville, WV 26534) "Who" is a spooky, country tinged garage song. "Mr. Confidential" is a cool, bouncy tune that sounds kind of like a buzzer, punkier Smiths. Much of the rest of it sounds abit like a country-tinged and less manic Alice Donut. Not bad, but not remarkable, either. - Paul Silver

88 FINGERS LOUIE - *88 Fingers Up Your Ass* (Hopeless Records, P.O. Box 7495, Van Nuys, CA 91409-7495) The last release of this melodic hardcore band, who broke up 10 days into their last tour in 1996. The CD contains their final recordings, as well as previously released but hard to find stuff and unreleased earlier material (including four live tracks from one of their final shows in Sweden.) The 27 tracks here are probably of most interest to fans of the band. The liner notes also document the final days of the band, their van accident in a snowstorm in Sweden, and the tension that forced them to conclude it was better to end the band "instead of killing each other." The members have all gone on to new things, and although it's the end of this band, no doubt we'll see their familiar imprint on other projects soon. - Alex Saville

A MINOR FOREST - *Flemish Altruism* (Thrill Jockey) San Francisco based math-rock band with a definite Louisville feel. The odd numbered tracks were produced by Bob Weston and the even numbered tracks by Steve Albini. They play long songs, in odd time signatures, with dynamic volume changes in the styles of Rodan, Shellac and Drive Like Jehu. While many bands try this genre, few are really good at it. A Minor Forrest are among the best. - TMF.

AFTER SCHOOL SPECIAL - *Wrong* (Mutant Pop Records, 5010 NW Shasta, Corvallis OR 97330) Not hardcore, not full fledge pop, but fun punk. My favorite is the song about how much Starbucks-type people suck... that was classic. Another rad band from the Mutant Pop people. - Eva Silverman

ALASTIS - *The Other Side* (Century Media) More Black Metal from the land of Century Media. ALASTIS are okay, but they just don't offer anything new to the genre. - Gary Mc.

✓ **ALLWOOD** (Suncrest Records, 56 W. 65th Street, Ste. 4J, New York NY 10023) Clifton, NJ's Allwood makes its debut with this engaging and

energetic CD, setting lyrics teeming with the usual post-adolescent angst to bright, fizzy melodies. Like a less abrasive Jane's Addiction, the band uses unusual chord changes and chugging tempos to accentuate lead singer Frank Collette's boyish tenor vocals. Mix in a little funk and you've got a rocking good time with an undeniable freshness that manages to avoid the pitfalls of generic bar-band rock. - Jim T.

ANTI-HISTAMINE DAYDREAM - *Lucid* (Laughing Owl Records, 487 West End Avenue #2B, New York, NY 10024) Alternative rock. Some of the songs have a rough, dark, garage quality to them, and these are the stand-out tracks of the disc. But most of this is pretty typical. - Paul Silver

JOSEPH ARTHUR - *Big City Secrets* (Real World/Caroline) Peter Gabriel loves the work of this 25-year old Akron, OH native; he even sings backup on one song. Arthur has traveled through the drug and punk cultures of Ohio, Atlanta, New York, and now London, and has produced some hurting songs. It's easy to see why Gabriel liked his demos; if you like Peter Gabriel and similar Brit pop/rock, you should love this. - Rodney Leighton amuck on "Admission." - Den S.

ATARI TEENAGE RIOT - *Burn, Berlin, Burn!* (Grand Royal) HOLY FUCKINI SHIT!!! We're talking intensity in ten cities! Your listening to severely fast electronic beats that make your brain hurt as you're ingesting very evil lyrics. Extremely painful and worth every penny! - Gary Mc.

ATIVAN - *Pills Versus Planes* (Polyvinyl Records, PO Box 1885, Danville IL 61834-1885) This is a facinating effort that had Steve Albini tweeking the knobs on four of the five tracks. Albini's presence is instantly recognizable as you are bombarded with loud guitar explosions woven neatly between interludes of subtle quiet. The vocals, which are used sparingly, range from a whisper to an agonized scream and are buried within the mix. Ativan seems to effortlessly create stirring original music that borrows from both jazz and indie rock without trivializing either. Tracks like "Know One Hundred Things" and "Mass" are beautiful and passionate examples of how loud and soft can combine to equal powerful music. The band gets a little repetitive on the one minute long "Metallic Boy" which sounds like an *In Utero* outtake. The disc finishes well with the six minute, non-Albini produced "Meditational Flaws." The track crawls along at one pace, perfectly capturing the mood set by its title. As the disc fades out you are left hearing only a faint guitar hiss. This is very cool, and worth your time. - Rich Quinlan

AUNTIE CHRIST - *Life Could Be A Dream* (Lookout Records, PO Box 11374, Berkeley CA 94712) In an attempt to again recapture the energy and style of early X, Exene Cervenkovna has formed a new outfit, Auntie Christ. While everything about this record is simplistic and stripped down, from the production, to the lyrics and the playing, at least Exene sounds a little more spirited. The unfortunate thing is that you have heard this all far too many times before. Matt Freeman and DJ Bonebrake are certainly a solid backbone for this trio, but Exene no longer has the voice to carry a band on her shoulders. Gone are the emotionally gripping days of "Johnny

Hit and Run Pauline". While songs like "I Don't" and "Not You" are short, steady bursts of pretentious free punk, the sound wears thin by the fifth track. "The Nothing Generation" rekindles a slight fire, but the album overall just did not interest me. In comparison to some of her recent work, this is a step forward for Exene, but of course that's not saying much. Where's John Doe when you need him...? - Rich Quinlan

Not quite the typical "Lookout SoCal" band. An extremely impressive gerlie (fronted) punk band to check out! Vocals? Think Exene Cervenka. Need I say more? - Eva Silverman

Debut foot-longer from ex-X'sers Exene Cervenka (formerly Cervenka) and DJ Bonebrake, with help on the low end from Rancid's Matt Freeman. While there's nothing really ground-breaking here, you gotta remember that these guys broke the ground in the first place, so it's okay that they stand here. The two things that really grabbed me on first listening were the lyrics and Sally Browder's production, but there really isn't anything at all wrong with this record. The rhythm section of Matt Freeman and DJ Bonebrake is as tight as a proverbial horse's ass in a fly swarm, and for the most part, I liked every song on here, classic '80's LA punk with a '90's perspective. It's good to hear the real thing, and believe me Jack, this is it. Now, if there were only some way to get John Doe in on this.... - David Brock

THE AUTHORITY - *Puppy Love* (Get Hip!) This is the Cali band that brought us the "I Hate Cops" song on the early Eighties comp *Killed By Death, Vol. 1*. An early punk feel and a sound sometimes reminiscent of another early Eighties band, TSOL, especially on the track "Between The Thighs." While this is still basically another look back into the past, the youthful energy is there and the songs deal with such timeless inevitables as death and masturbation. - Tom Brebric

AUTOMATIC - *Transmitter* (550/Murmur) A foot stomping down on one of several effects pedals graces the cover of this disc and manages to sum things up pretty well. Automatic is playing rock and roll music here, but manage to avoid the dreaded prefab monster by mixing up their guitar sounds a lot. In doing so, the moods of their songs vary a lot from track to track but don't sound completely foreign to each other....you know, flow. There's prettiness to be found here, a lot of vaguely Euro-sounding rock, a dash of that Urge Overkill slink (but devoid of pretense, pose and Martinis)....it all fits together well. Most of these songs would be ones that I'd be happy to hear on the radio. - Mike Fournier

AUTOMATICS - *20 Golden Greats!* (Mutant Pop Records 5010 NW Shasta, Corvallis OR 97330) Fast, raw old school punk rock like that reminds of the Queers in a big way. I like their frantic attack, crude recording style and retarded lyrics. 20 songs that combine 2 Eps with most songs clocking in at under a minute. Plenty of vinyl popping and hissing on this CD so you won't miss out on what it's supposed to sound like. And to top it off, one of these guys looks like he belongs in Devo. - John Lisa

BABOON - *Secret Robot Control* (Wind-Up) The winner of this issue's "Where the hell did THIS come from?" award. Harnessing the energy of any number of good ol' infuriated hardcore bands vocally while the music grafts harmonics, dissonance and bombast into a standard rock structure....that is to say that Baboon isn't one of those bands who begs to be seen as substantial just because they play in seven or whatever. Rather, I tend to think that they're substantial because they take elements of music that you've heard before (trumpet a la Ulysses, ping and scree circa "Atomizer", Assfactor 4's tortured yowling) and seamlessly blend 'em to make something that sounds dynamic, loud, and, most importantly, amazingly fresh. In a word: hell yes. - Mike Fournier

BACK OF DAVE/PROZAC MEMORY - Split LP (Playing Field Records, PO Box 851, Urbana IL 61803-0851) Back of Dave plays noisy, bass heavy minimalist punk that has brief flashes of inspiration, but otherwise falls flat. The songs take a little too long to get going, and there is not much of a payoff once they hit their stride. The band attempts to create a dissonant sound of swirling instrumentation, but ends up just sounding messy and stale. The emotional aspects here sound forced and uninspired. However, this stuff was recorded back in 1994, so they could have greatly improved by now. Prozac Memory play punk in a similar style to Back of Dave, but are a more cohesive musical unit. They are a tighter band, playing a nearly D.C.-esque punk with vocals that are somewhere between spoken and screamed. Tracks like "Meniscus", and "Drawn Into" displayed a unique sound. There are still aspects of their sound that need to be fine tuned, but they are definitely the stronger of the two acts featured here. - RichQuinlan

BAILTERSPACE - *Capsul* (Turnbuckle Records, 163 #rd Ave. #435, New York, NY 10003) Intense, melancholy, wall-o-guitar fuzz pop, sometimes with Fall-like sound and fury, and always interesting to listen to. On

"Picking Up" a telephone's DTMF and ring-back are used to create some of the thickly textured sounds. Very cool disc. Pick it up! - Paul Silver

DAN BARCAN - *No City* (Faith House Prod., PO Box 311, Garfield NJ 07026) Seventies-sounding singer-songwriter solo album, with a low-key backing band ala' the first Elvis Costello or Graham Parker LP's. Unfortunately, the lyrics rarely rise above the vapid and I don't like the guy's voice, which tends to be reedy and strained whenever he reaches for a note. - Jim T.

JZ BARRELL - *Here's The Surprise* (NG Records) JZ Barrell - formerly of NYC's Alter Boys, Gashounds, and Smack Dab - goes it along on this prodigious cottoncandy- flavored disc, recapturing the loveably quirky pop sound of early Eighties craftsmen like the dB's. Barrell's experience as a studio engineer pays off with a kaleidoscopic array of guitar tones and wonderfully full production, including lots of la-la-la backup vocals and some clever instrumentation (like the blatting trumpet on "Chamomile Tea" or the familiar pealing theme song from the Mister Softee ice cream trucks on "Mr. Softy.") Barrell manages to mix a little Brian Wilson and a little Chris Stamey for an album that's actually much better than anything those two have done lately. - Jim Testa

BAZOOKA- *Fool Mr. Rockstar* (SST Records) Weird. Jazzy. Funky. Totally experimental music with keys, drums, flute, guitar and bass. Reminded me of songs in the background that play during cartoons. I liked it. - Eva S.

BEATNIK TERMITES - *Live at the Orifice* (Skull duggery Label, 77 Scituate Ave., Scituate MA 02066) The Termites return with their brand of safe bouncy Queers-like pop punk, with an emphasis on the pop. To their credit, the Termites have a great sense of humor and the ability to make music for the sheer fun of making music. There is an innocence to the majority of this stuff that harkens back to the birth of rock n' roll. Tracks like "Mary Lou", "Surf Dancin'" and "Ode to Susie and Joey" are bubbly sugar-rush songs that borrow as much from Buddy Holly as they do the Ramones. This is very well done and a lot of fun. - Rich Q.

BEDLAM HOUR - *Contact* - This self-released 14-song CD is the first real full-length effort to be released from these South Carolina stalwarts in over 10 years! Similar in many respects to Down By Law, Bedlam Hour dwell in the 2-guitars (Extra Crispy, please) and heavy melody area. What sets them apart is Chuck Walker's half-naïve, half-intentional employment of big rock clichés in both his songwriting and guitar playing. While the nod to power ballads on the first song is surely tongue in cheek, almost every guitar lead shows a guy who adores Judas Priest and Kiss as much as Agnostic Front. And therein lies the beauty of *Contact*; after all, weren't you raised that way too? - Johnny Puke

BETA MINUS MECHANIC - *Disassembly Required* (Revelation, PO Box 5232, Huntington Beach CA 92615-5232) This is a surprising release from Revelation. Musically, the four male members of Beta Minus Mechanic bash out controlled mid tempo melodies that border on heavy without crossing over. The real highlight here is the vocal ability of Ina Jeffress. Her angelic, almost ethereal singing emerges on tracks like "Memories", "More Than Just a Girl" and the almost Tori Amos-esque piano ballad finale "She", which is easily one of the most beautiful songs I have heard in quite a while. The band displays remarkable range and their background of musical theory training shines through. One has to believe that Jeffress' vocals will give this band a greater opportunity at commercial crossover success, for her singing will awaken and excite many different kinds of people and programmers. I was truly impressed with this release, and I would keep an eye on this band. - Rich Quinlan

BETTY'S LOVE CHILD - *Angelfish* (17th Street Records, 797 E. St. John St., San Jose, CA 95112) Jawbreaker didn't really break up -- they testified against The Mob and were relocated to San Jose through the witness protection program. This CD is pretty good. - Shawn Scallen

BIG BACK FORTY - *Bested* (PolyGram Records) What we've got here pards is 13 rock-solid tracks worth of dark, crunchy, disturbing kickin'-them-blues-around down-in-the-dumps country rock. The husky, drawing, anguish-drenched vocals, tersely melodic arrangements, the plaintive, plain-spoken heartache expressed in the lyrics, eloquently articulated feelin' real bad themes (namely regret, anger, and melancholy, with a pinch of ego-crushing self-reflection), and constant angst-ridden elegiac air go down smoother than a shot of raw corn whiskey -- and impart a similar devastating effect on the listener ("L.T. Johnny," a harrowing song about a vicious, abusive boyfriend, hits especially hard). Rarely has such painful, gut-wrenching agony been so exquisitely (and touchingly) presented. A savagely beautiful open sore of a record. - Joe Wawrzyniak

BIG FAT LOVE - *Hell House* (Grand Royal) The story of this band is actually more interesting than the music. Big Fat Love originally existed in the early 80's and featured Mike Diamond and Adam Yauch while they were in the formative stages with the Beastie Boys. All of the members of this band were tired of playing punk rock, so they attempted to stretch their collective horizons. The result was country flavored, southern-sounding rock with a rootsiness feel about it. This is unexpected at best, knowing the histories of the people involved. This disc features seven old songs, recorded in December of 84, as well four new songs recorded by the original line up, excluding Mike D. in 1996. Tracks like "Trashman", "Farm Boy from Hell", and "Mississippi Red" best capture the bands' original form. The new songs are enjoyable, but not quite as much fun as the earlier work, lacking the raw, care-free mentality that the 84 songs have. "Hell House" is the best of the new batch. Some of the disc drags at times, but if you're willing to experiment, you may wanna try this one. - Rich Quinlan

BIG'N - *Discipline Through Sound* (Gasoline Boost Records) The vocals sound like the singer from AC/DC with his head in a tin can. In fact, these guys had a track on an AC/DC tribute album called *High Voltage*. Besides a few swears, I couldn't make out any of the lyrics. Even while reading along with the liner notes! Guitars, bass and drums all sound like Helmet only a little bit harder. If you like one song, you'll like them all. I didn't. - Den S.

BIGWIG - *Un-Merry Melodies* (Fearless Records, 13772 Goldenwest St. #545, Westminster, CA 92683) BigWig's debut album might have the worst cover art and cheesiest album title but everything else about this NJ four piece overrides that. Every song flows smoothly with tight as hell guitar riffs and crazy drumming. BigWig mixes a lot of old Fat Wreck style songwriting with political and humorous lyrics. There are plenty of "hits" on this album, some of the standouts that make me encourage every fan of punk rock to get this album include "Old Lady, Dylan's Song," "Girl in the Green Jacket," "Drunken Knight," and "My So Called Friend." A strong first outing from a band with lots of potential. -Dave Thirsty

BILE - "Biledegradable" EP (Energy Records, 545 8th Ave. 17th Floor, NYC 10018) The latest release from Bile begins with a lovingly mutilated version of the Who's "My Generation", and proceeds to become more bizarre from there. This brief seven song EP features only four new tracks from lead freak Krysztof, who created "Biledegradable" on a very tight budget and limited time. At different points of the disc, these limitations become obvious. However, for the most part, there is some interesting and deeply disturbing creations here. The finest example of man and machine working together for complete destruction is "Fascion", featuring the lines "Human race, human race/You are god's biggest mistake" growled and spat at you over the top of fuzzed out guitar and a rapid-fire drum loop. The disc also includes two lengthy earlier Bile pieces taken from the "Darkbeat" EP. While "The Phantom God" and "Planet Weather Control" are far from dance-club hits, they do display a less intense side, closer to techno than doom. "Phanton God" in particular is built around a throbbing bass line that destroys any of the so called industrial bands currently being snatched up by the industry or being splattered across commercial radio. This is highly recommended. - Rich Q.

BIG LOAFER - *Acid Mouth* (8 Ball Discs, 254 Oswald Place, Vauxhall NJ 07088) I know this band is local and I kinda knew what to expect, and I got exact that: Dirty guitar rock ala' the Replacements/Husker Du mixed with some pop. In all, not enough surprising hooks, vocals too much on top, but worth a listen and better if you check 'em out live. - Dave Urbano

BIM SKALA BIM - *Universal* (BIB Records, PO Box 441606, Somerville MA 02144) When it comes to Ska, it's hard for me to dislike it. BIM are no exception. These guys helped define the Boston sound (very 2 Tone-y). Although I don't find this to be their best album, BIM are still worth checking into. - Gary Mc.

BIS - *New Transistor Heroes* (Grand Royal) My favorite word to describe Bis is "snotty." Not that they're elitist, just contemptuous. Musically, they're very 80's Brit Pop (probably cuz they're Scottish) with Brit punk, Brit disco, and Brit humor smooshed in. In short, Bis are the 90's equivalent of early 80's "snotty" New Wave. Very cool! - Gary Mc.

BLACK FLAG - *The Complete 1982 Demos Plus More* (Manson Records) This is a bootleg that I found (like you don't buy them). "Beware if a friend wants to watch you rehearse with a strange bag sitting by the soundboard!" Very good quality demos featuring some latter Black Flag favorites including "Slip It In", "My War" and "Black Coffee". The 1984 interview is a treat when you hear how pissed Rollins sounds. The CD insert is nothing but drawings from long time cover artist Raymond Pettibon. This is worth locating. I would tell you where, but the place might get closed by the Feds. - Gary Mc.

BLATZ/FILTH - *The Shit Split* (Lookout) Lookout records has been kind enough to release this classic batch of noise punk on cd for those of you who missed it the first time around on vinyl. Both Blatz and Filth play blistering, harsh sloppy punk full of screams and boundless energy. Blatz is a bit more reckless and out of control, but Filth is a close second. If the needle on your turntable has been worn down, go out and pick this gem up on disc. There are over two hours of total destruction, including Blatz classics like "Berkeley is my Baby", "Danse Macabre" and their scathing version of Fear's "I Don't Care About You". Filth's effort is just as abrasive and intense. Very wild and worth owning - Rich Quinlan

BLINK 182 - *Dude Ranch* (Cargo/MCA) This reviewer can truly say there's nothing original on this disk. Angst-ridden, sarcastic, self-loathing, modern-day punk rock (the goofy kind.) But the kids seem to love 'em. - Gary Mc.

Dude Ranch is another collection of fast, catchy punk from San Diego's happiest punksters. Blink 182 do not shatter any new ground, for as we all know, fast guitars, speedy vocals and harmless, funny lyrics are not exactly new ideas, but the band does play with above average energy and pure fun. *Dude Ranch* is a slick, well produced collection of songs that vary from the



Bigwig

Photo by Jim Testa

ridiculous("Dick Lips", "Apple Shampoo") to anthems of a more serious nature such as "A New Hope" which displays a bit more maturity for these guys, both personally and musically. This did not blow me away, but it is a solid record with the potential to make all the little kids happy. - Rich Quinlan

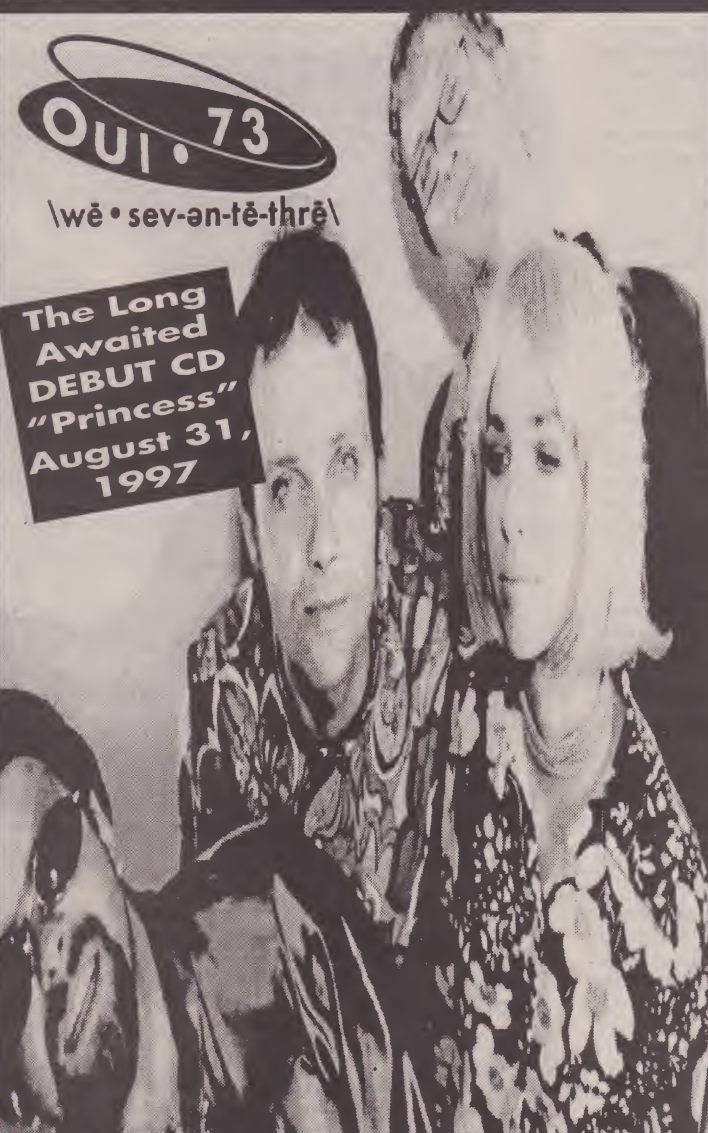
BLONDE REDHEAD - *Fake Can Be Just As Good* (Touch & Go) With the feeling of some odd detective soundtrack, repetitious rhythms, and smooth, eclectic vocals, Blond Redhead's third full-length is at once relaxing and unsettling. Each song has its own tension, whether it be peppered with the female scream of Japanese guitarist Kazu or the Thurston Moore-ish stylings of Italian guitarist Amadeo (one of a pair of twins; his brother Simon plays drums.) Vern from Unwound plays bass on the entire effort. - Johnny Puke

BLUE MEANIES - *Full Throttle* (Thick, 916 N. Damen Ave, Chicago IL 60622) Buried somewhere beneath the bile, adrenaline, snot, speed, jazzy skronk, and testosterone of the Blue Meanies, there's a ska band, with skanking rhythms, horns, keyboards, and lyrics that seethe with rage and a profound disgust with the world. Billy Spunke's caterwauling vocals throttle your ears like the mutant offspring of Jello Biafra and Johnny Rotten. He means it, *man* ... and if you don't believe the evidence of this forceful,

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furious, and prodigious CD, see the band live, when Spunke and his bandmates become a true force of nature. - Jim Testa

BLUE VAN GOGH - *Hi Fi Junkie Sonata* (Callner Music, PO Box 3666, Beverly Hills CA 90212) With nods to Sixties pop, psychedelia, and British shoegazing, New Brunswick, NJ's Blue Van Gogh covers a lot of bases. Singer Patti M-Yodlowsky and guitarist Ray Andersen trade off lead vocals, often combining for creamy two-part harmonies on both mid- to-slow tempo'd pop reveries and livelier tracks that add a dollop of funk. BVG isn't afraid to mix its influences - "Honeyhead" combines a searing Janis Joplinesque vocal with swirling distorto guitar, "Spaceman" updates and funkifies the Byrds' "Mr. Spaceman," and "Little Secret" unleashes a radio-ready chorus that suggests major commercial possibilities. The rhythm section seems to be the only weak point; bass and drums rarely emerge from the mix doing anything interesting, and a little more danceability wouldn't hurt. Still, a promising debut from a band that doesn't sound anything at all like the beer-drenched Stogecore that's currently all the rage in Brunfuss. Kudos to Callner Music on the art design; the CD booklet is bright and eye-catching, while the disc itself is cleverly painted to resemble a small 33 1/3 LP, a really cute idea - Jim Testa

BO BUD GREENE - *The Same But Different* (SuperCottonmouth, PO Box 480555, Los Angeles CA 90048) There's a lesson to be learned here and here it is: Singing out of tune does not equal indie credibility. - Jim T.

THE BOMBORAS - *It Came From Pier 13* (Dionysus) Vintage surf sounds played on vintage gear, all done with a primitive production quality that gives it an authenticity close to vinyl. The L.A. band includes Jake Cavalliere, formerly of the Fuzztones, and sports all the required rhythm and reverb to make this a fun listen. - Tom Brebric

THE BOSS MARTIANS - *13 Evil Tales* (Dionysus) More 60's surf music from Seattle. Authentic sounds via the original equipment (Fender amps and guitars, no effects pedals!) Half vocals and half instrumentals mesh to create what the band called "Frat Rock" - but fortunately, not the same style that reared its ugly head in Hoboken in a few years ago. These mellow sounds have their appeal, but this style of music needs more energy, dammit! Fans of the Trashmen might dig it. - Tom Brebric

BOTH WORLDS - *Beyond Zero Gravity* (Another Planet Records, 740 Broadway, New York, NY 10003) Pre Hip-Hop influenced, good old fashioned, NY Hardcore. Just the way Krishna would have wanted it to be! - Gary McGarvey Jr.

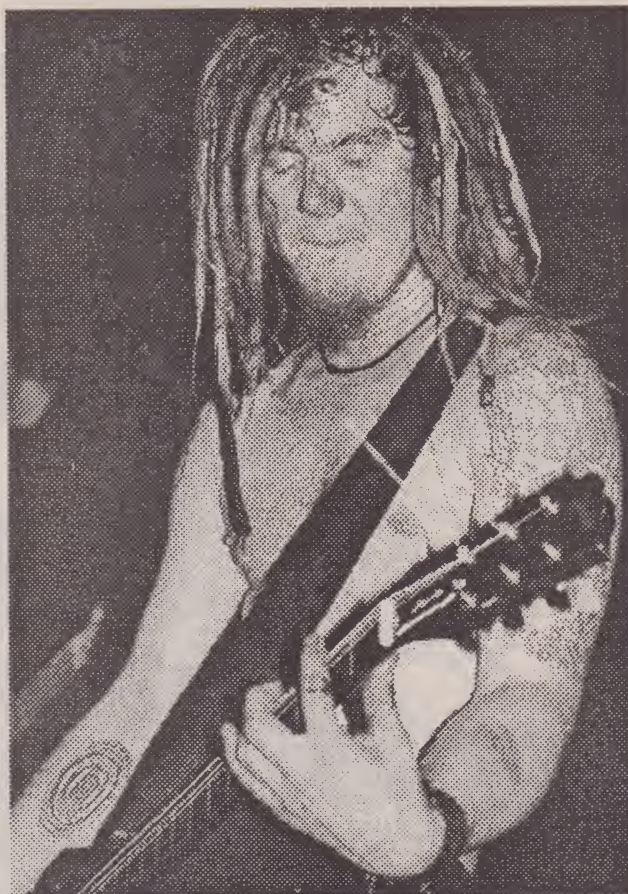
BOWERY ELECTRIC - *Beat* (Beggars Banquet) Bowery eclectic. Listening to this 70+ minute CD you come across as many different styles of electronica as faces you would encounter between St. Mark's Place and Houston. Echos and static, beats and guitar drones juxtaposed and recontextualized. Dubtherial. Gastr Del Morricone. Floydient. Philip Glasswell. Not just another illbient record. - Shawn Scallen

THE BOY WONDER JINX - *Left Handed Smoke Shifter* (Slingshot Records, P.O. Box 5654, Raleigh NC 27650) Emo boy rock, powerful and energetic. -Eva Silverman

BRAND NEW UNIT - *Looking Back Again* (BYO Records, P.O. Box 67264 Los Angeles, CA 90067) Hailing from Vancouver, Canada, this watertight punk-thrash foursome proves that not everything from the Great White North has to be goofy and lightweight. Visceral without being extremely crude or sloppy about it, these guys bang out a throbbin', polished, streamlined array of fast'n'hard songs which all boast cool, crisp vocals, fairly basic, but solid instrumental arrangements, occasionally funny lyrics ("Have a Nice Life (If Your Life Sucks)" and "The Funny Thing Is, I Know Nothing" are especially amusing), plenty of that appropriately pissed-off down-on-everything punker attitude, and a raw, pounding sound which assaults the listener without coming on too strong or wearing you out in the process. Pretty goddamn good as far as this stuff goes -- and ideal for any time you want to hear some tunes that are fueled by a potent mix of sweat, adrenaline, and pure, unfettered just-go-for-it vitality. - Joe Wawrzyniak

BRILLIANTINE - *Vain Glory* (Hep Cat, PO Box 17022, Chapel Hill NC 27516) Nice, calm boy rock. Indie if you will. A little experimental, not really straight forward anything. Soft and sweet. - Eva S.

BUILT TO SPILL - *Perfect From Now On* (Warner Bros.) Now this is great stuff - quiet and unassuming but layered with all sorts of sounds for the attentive ear. The high ethereal vocals of Doug Marsch blend perfectly with the percussive notes of guitars layered atop Moog, piano, and cello. This is the stuff of quiet Sunday mornings. Perfect! - Johnny Puke



BUZZOVEN

Photo by Jim Testa

R.L. BURNSIDE - *Mr. Wizard* (Fat Possum/Epitaph) I bet you're asking yourself (yeah right,) Why is a bluesman on a Punk label? Well, with his loose yet raw playing style, R.L. can be considered a punker of the blues. His gritty and explosive guitar work is enough to make the toughest guy tap his feet. *Mr. Wizard* isn't as hectic as *Ass Pocket O' Whiskey* (his last album), but it's still enough to give you ball-hair shivers! If you're into Jon Spencer Blues Explosion, then you should get this and check out the real McCoy. - Gary Mc.

BUZZOVEN - *The Gospel According To...* (Allied) More drugged-up sluggish rock. The best track is the third one, "Red/Green." In all, better than their last record on that lame NY label but not as good as their first one on Allied. They seem to slow it down at times, as if they're getting beaten down, but on the whole the first four tracks are winners. - Dave Urbano

DAVID BYRNE - *Feelings* (Luaka Bop/Warner Bros.) Who is this guy trying to fool anyway? "Oh, he's just matured now," his apologists say. "You have to listen to him with an ear for adult contemporary music." Phooey. Despite this being a better effort than some of his other solo work, or certainly many other artists, Byrne must be judged against his past. None of his solo projects even come close to competing with the T. Heads corpus, except for possibly *Naked*, which was a harbinger of awful things to come. Now maybe I am just being an old fart ("Those guys were really great on their first few records."), but for all his Latin rhythms and personal sensibilities Byrne just isn't making music that packs the creative impact of great band he once fronted. Once Byrne was able to rise above the way he obviously tries to be weird and quirky; the foil of Talking Heads' collective music was able to strip away the pretense that he carries with him like a protective cloak. The album art for *Feelings* is all about David Byrne as a plastic doll, for gods' sake. The leading edge of music has moved past a fascination with postmodernism, Byrne hasn't. - Alex Saville

The Talking Heads was, without question, one of the best, most eclectic, and constantly surprising rock groups to ever do their singularly strange thing on one classic record after another. The band's two key sterling attributes were a winningly droll sense of humor and a laudable willingness to experiment with every last musical style you could think of. Both the eccentric levity and wide-open musical diversity are featured in

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gloriously copious abundance on this engagingly off-kilter solo venture, in which Byrne once again proves that not only is he one of rock's most utterly flipped-out deadpan oddballs but also that his days as the Talking Heads' lead singer were by no means some lucky fluke. "This madness is attractive," Byrne sings at one point -- and he sure ain't kidding, for this album completely earns its status as a seriously intoxicating blast of pure, refreshing, unadulterated aural weirdness. - Joe Wawrzyniak

THE C. GIBBS REVIEW - *Sincerity's Ground* (Cargo Music, 4901-906 Morena Blvd., San Diego, CA 92117-3432) Solo debut from Morning Glories' frontman Christian Gibbs. Opting for a more blues-based country twang than the wall of guitar assault that one usually associates with The Morning Glories, this album recalls everyone from Neil Young & Crazy Horse to Johnny Cash to the Stones to Uncle Tupelo. But just like these guys, Gibbs' country is sometimes dark, but the sun don't shine everyday in the real world, so why should every song be happy? As today's music scene gets more derivative and self-indulgent, it's good to see that bands are not afraid to explore their roots and get back to the honesty and emotion that country seems to offer. Intelligent lyrics, intriguing music and more proof that country just ain't for the redneck set. Like it or not, country is here to stay. - David Brock

CAGNEY AND LACEE - *Six Feet of Chain* (No. 6, POB 5037, NY NY 10185) This is kinda neat. Dean Wareham, he of Luna, and his wife (who is never mentioned by name in any of the info) covering a bunch of songs that I know I've heard playing in Louie's Diner or any of the other thousand traincars converted into blue collar diners. Various extraneous noises, adding tastes of country flavor, float over the acoustic guitar, synth and canned drums. Somehow, the pretty vocals manage to work with the music, which alternately sounds like it's being played in a church or a karaoke booth. - Mike Fournier

CAKELIKE - *Bruiser Queen* (Vapor Records) Imagine strawberry and jello. Then add different crystals and gems. That is what Cakelike fills their sound with. They conjure pop-rock and experimental with their delicious angelic voices. - Eva Silverman

CAMBER - *Beautiful Charade* (Deep Elm, PO Box 1965, NYC 10156) Camber can make your head wobble and your face grin with their rhythmic dissonance. With competent musicians, skillful composers, and an engaging lead vocalist, what more could you ask for? They balance the grungy with the hypnotic and the result is an engaging and interesting exercise in alternative pop. - Michael Chant

CANDY MACHINE - *Tune International* (DeSoto/Dischord) The best way to describe this is Indie-Rock (you know, Dischord). Odd chords, thick bass lines and swirly guitars really stand out on this. C.M. reek slightly of Girls Against Boys, which is cool for me. I think they are worth checking out. - Gary Mc.

CAST IRON HIKE - *Watch It Burn* (Victory Records) If you're new to the 'Hike, the title track, the first one on here, will pretty much prepare you for the hellride you're in for. Jake's vocals, hoarse and emotive with the slightest tinge of cockrock in 'em, relate the metaphorical burning of the already burnt-out town of Worcester over a soundtrack of amazingly tight and occasionally hand-slapping-forehead amazing hardcore. If you're not new to the Hike, you might recognize the reprise of "Boxed" from their wonderful eponymous Trustkill EP and the twenty or so seconds of "One Grand Soap Opera" retitled "As the World (B)urns." Or perhaps you'll notice the occasional forays into that post-core textured buildup thing and realize that these guys have more musical depth than you realized a 'hardcore' band (one on Victory, at that) could have. At any rate, Cast Iron Hike's first full length is well-done (but what's up with the 20 minutes of feedback at the end, guys?), well-played, and I damn well wish they'd come play Portsmouth again already..... - Mike Fournier

NICK CAVE AND THE BAD SEEDS - *The Boatman's Call* (Reprise/Mute) Last year's release, *Murder Ballads*, seemed to be a milestone for Cave and his Bad Seeds. The collection of gruesome blood ballads and traditional songs of murder confirmed Cave's rude passions to be akin to the lust of a serial killer. Granted there has never been a point in his career in which he was loved for writing songs that display his modesty and virgin white heart, *Murder Ballads* was an exceptionally morbid piece of work -- a grateful tip of the hat to the most heinous desires of man. The silent longing for such a wicked album granted, one might be tempted to think that Cave has settled into his happy home of murderous delights for good. On the contrary, Cave seems to be covering his tracks. On the surface, the newest Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds album, *The Boatman's Call*, appears to be an anti-thesis to last years' *Murder Ballads*. Delving into the 12 new songs unraps a different kind of loss altogether. *The Boatman's Call* is a sensitive album documenting Cave's passions, regrets, and hope in a

seemingly faithless world. Much like an angel condemned to live amongst earthly animals, Cave struggles for clarity, he struggles to be a man in love, physically and with the holy cosmos. Slow, somber longings and poetic memories show this album to be a personal sacrifice to his own troubled, mortal coil. Cave's piano work is the foundation for all of the *Boatman* songs and is pushed to the foreground more than usual. Beautifully crafted in verse and composition, *The Boatman's Call* serves as Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds' most sophisticated, and most painfully passionate collection of songs to date. Even the devil cries sometimes. - Greg Matherly

NICK CAVE AND THE BAD SEEDS - *Into My Arms*, CD Single (Mute) Taken from their latest release, *The Boatman's Call*, this issue of the first single includes two non-lp tracks. "Into My Arms" is a plea for lost love, the only way Nick Cave could plea, "I don't believe in an interventionist god. . . but if I did I would kneel down and ask him/ not to intervene when it came to you. . ." On "Little Empty Boat," the Bad Seeds show their familiar mysterious side with an eerie recognition of a hopeless will, and "Right Now I'm A-Roaming" is a humorous procrastination that finds Cave promising to straighten up his life and live in domestic peace after he finishes his roaming. Normally I'm not a big fan of single releases due to the floor-scrap quality of most bonus tracks. All in all, however, this is a very fine release. A good choice for their first single and a couple of grade A songs to boot. A must have for those who find beauty in *The Boatman's Call*. - Greg Matherly

CATFIGHT - *Kitty Litter* (Worrybird Disk, PO Box 95485, Atlanta GA 30547) Self-described "garage-sploitation" with a cleaned-up, almost 50's rock n roll slant. "Do The Pussycat" is a cute dance number. These are harmless cats who have had their front claws removed, but even if Catfight has no bite, it is playful, fun, and fuzzy. - Frank Phobia

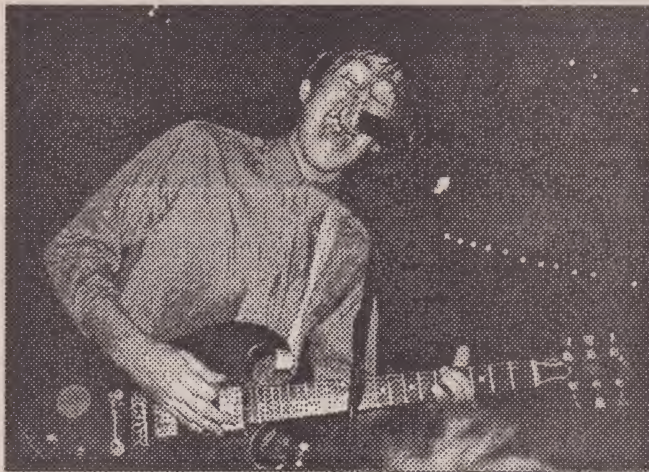
THE CAULFIELDS - *L* (A&M) Just what we don't fuckin' need: still another goddamn whiny, directionless, proudly goin'-nowhere-slowly grunge music outfit pissing and moaning about nothing in particular, aiming for less, and succeeding all-too-well with this dim, substandard goal. It's set to your standard harsh, abrasive, incessantly droning Wall of Tuneless Distorted Fuzzy Noise, boasts typically self-indulgent, navel-gazing, don't-say-much-of-anything nitwit lyrics ("I sleep for thirteen hours/But it just feels like a lull in a lullaby"), and possesses all the charisma of stinky, rotten tuna salad. In short, it's music by obnoxious nihilist deadheads who are too fuckin' stupid and obtuse to realize that they're obnoxious nihilist deadheads. - Joe Wawrzyniak

CHEAP TRICK (Red Ant) Cheap Trick is the only band that comes to mind who are still creating great consistent rock and have been since the Seventies. This new studio CD is the self-proclaimed first release of the second half of their career. It sounds close to the original self-titled record (1977) and *In Color* (1978) mixed with *All Shook Up's* (1980) Beatles overtones. The production is perfect - it's straight ahead, stripped down rock. Man of a million voices Robin Zander sounds stunning, like a twentysomething angst-twisted lovesick psycho on the opening track, "Anytime." Cheap Trick seem to have finally figured out what their fans want and at the same time have created a great record that fills the void in the current state of power pop. It's time to rediscover this American institution. This is a fantastic album that will drive Cheap Trick to the year 2000 with ease. - Frank Phobia

CHEMICAL BROTHERS - *Block Rockin' Beats* (Astralwerks) I'm glad to see these guys finally getting big in the U.S., I've liked them for quite some time (I was a fan way back when, yo!... don't you hate that?) This is just a single off the new album called *Dig Your Own Hole*, and when you hear a track called "Prescription Beat," you will like them too. "MAD break-beats, homey" - Gary Mc.

CHISEL - *Set You Free* (Gern Blandsten) Retro-pop with a slight garage-ish feel and sounds somewhat early Beatles-esque. Organ and horns add to the atmosphere, and on "The Unthinkable is True" yield a sound slightly reminiscent of Chicago in a few places. Cool sounds. - Paul Silver

CHRISTIE FRONT DRIVE (Caulfield Records, PO Box 84323 Lincoln, NE 68501) Oppressive sadness predominates on this hypnotically morose disc whose key leitmotifs are despair, ennui, and regret. While this foursome could seriously use a good pick-me-up psychologically, musically these highly proficient down-at-the-heels dudes commit no heinous misdeeds: the slow, moody, mournful arrangements -- gradual, dirge-like tempos, subdued beats, a steady, but slothful rhythm -- start out lightly, but exquisitely build to gut-wrenching crescendos, the singing cuts deep without resorting to any needless histrionics, the melancholy lyrics are never hackneyed or too self-pitying, and the overall sense of gloom hits home time and time again. However, the mix is quite murky and the band



CHISEL

Photo by Jim Testa

occasionally gets rather monotonous. Still, the overwhelmingly elegiac tone remains absorbing throughout. By no means a real feelgood album and certainly not recommended for manic depressives, this makes for perfect crappy, interminable, stuc-in-the-house-on-a-rainy-Sunday-afternoon listening. - Joe W.

THE CHUBBIES - *Tres Flores* (Sympathy For the Record Industry) Such cute poppy sounds from three girls, with songs about life and love. These songs make you feel like an innocent young child bopping her head to the latest tunes. Some songs reflect bittersweet Joan Jett 'strawberries-smooth sound and a sweet beat. - Eva Silverman

CHUMP - *Spaceheater* (Readymade Records 190 Carroll St. S. E. Atlanta Georgia 30312) Reminds me of Bush except for the more intricate guitar parts and deeper lyrics (I guess, but who am I to judge). Three boy band that seems to know how to rock, just not too much. - Eva S.

CLAWHAMMER - *Hold Your Tongue (and Say Apple)* (Interscope) Don't feel bad... I tried it too. This noisy bunch's new release has a definite blues feel to it. I compare Clawhammer to *Seinfeld* in the sense that the songs are about nothing of value, yet funny. For example, a song about pigeon shit, vibrators and even huffing (those dumb fuckers that inhale anything in site). These guys are too fun to keep to my self. - Gary Mc.

Holy shit! Every time I hear a new Clawhammer LP all I can think is "Shit! I don't know how to write songs! I've just been jerkin' off!" Jon Wahl and Co. have put together another document that they are probably one of the most original and innovative (two words you will not ever hear me throw around loosely) bands in existence. I mean, what else can you say for a band that can do the ol' Duke Ellington standard "Caravan", and not only pull it off, but add something to it that wasn't there before? Make it where you just don't hear it the same? I remember my anger and frustration at watching these guys tear through a set at a club in Nashville (this is a city where The Supersuckers drew less than 75 people on a Saturday night and ska bands are crawling out of every shit heap on every stinking corner...get the picture? It ain't pretty...) while the crowd, not wanting to bother to listen to anything different, let alone challenging, booed and hissed and yelled for the headliners, Rocket From The Crypt (who I do like and think are a good band, but the behavior was uncalled for). Before you think that this story has no point, there is a song on here called "Gnashville" that seems to have been "inspired" by events of their Nashville jaunt. And I keep coming back to that song. I have always been a big fan of these guys and I will suspect that they will not be returning here very soon. But in spite of or because of it, this is an amazing album from an amazing band, and I just want to let you know that all of us here are not ignorant close-minded assholes. There are those of us who are people of fine taste and superior breeding. The rest of you can just fuck the hell off. - David Brock

COCTEAU TWINS - *Milk and Kisses* (Capitol) I don't know how they do it, but the Cocteau Twins can do no wrong. This record is as beautiful as anything they've ever done. *Milk and Kisses* is a dreamy, musical soundscape with soothing, lullaby vocals that will have you floating in bliss. - TMF

COLOSSAMITE - *All Lingo's Glamour* (Skin Graft Records P.O. Box 257546 Chicago IL 60625) Weirdo, crazy fun guitar parts with a screaming voice. - Eva Silverman

COUSIN DALE - *Tossin' Helmets* (Petunia Records, 1522 48th Ave. #3, San Francisco, CA 94122). Amateurish 3-chord pop-punk in the vein of the Queers, Hi-Fives, Smugglers, etc. The kind of thing you hear way too often these days. Decent vocal harmonies, but the songs were very predictable and unimaginative. - Jon Clark

CRADLE OF FILTH - *Dusk and Her Embrace* (Fierce Recordings, 285 West Broadway, New York, NY 10013) Remember when Slayer was the hardest band around? A lot has changed since then; for one, the instrumentation has progressed to a higher level. The playing has become better without the need for gratuitous speed but there is that same old problem with this genre, those annoying vocals. I liked this for the most part, but I couldn't get past the singer (too castrated sounding). - Gary McGarvey

CRAW - *map, monitor, surge* (Cambodia Recordings, 16013 Waterloo Rd. Ste. 405, Cleveland OH 44110) The recording by Steve Albini and Bill Korecky gives this latest Craw release a razor-sharp edge, all the better to capture the band's intricate math-rock rhythms, psychokiller vocals, and slashing, chaotic guitars. Read the lyrics and you'll discover another side of this group - terse song-stories festering with a pungent wit and the literary zeal of a Greg Graffin - but the words pale next to the maelstrom of turbulent emotions conjured up by the music. - Jim T.

THE CRIMINALS - *Never Been Caught* (Lookout!) I guarantee that I'll never get caught listening to this again. Terribly weak-sounding punk that is devoid of emotion or intensity. The band attempts to play hooky punk with a pop twist, but just fails miserably, as the majority of the material is played at a mid-tempo pace which just goes nowhere. Jesse Luscious' vocal snarl seems too forced to be taken seriously, most obviously on tracks like "No Victim Here", "My School Sucks" and "Criminal Rocknroll". A lack of vision, creativity, and having Billie Joe Armstrong producing results in an album from an act that needs to revamp its tired sound. - Rich Q.

CRUTCH - *Sold by Weight* (Bong Load Custom Records, PO Box 931538, Hollywood, CA, 90093) They've played with punk bands and I've seen their stickers throughout Oakland and Berkeley so I was expecting something a little less...rock. - Paul Barger

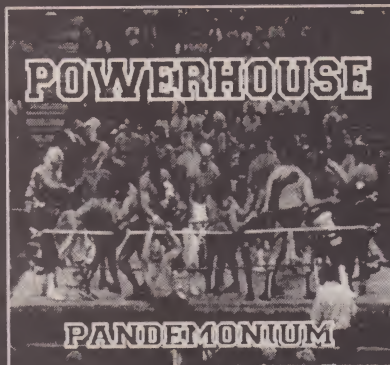
CUNNINGHAMS - *Zeroed Out* (Revolution/Warner Bros.) Conventional wisdom says, Beware of alternaboy wearing eyeliner, especially if they're from Seattle. The Cunninghams eloquently refute that theory with a sparkling debut of sassy power-pop. Lead singer Seven (that may or may not be a Seinfeld reference; remember George's idea for the perfect baby name?) has one of those honeyed voices like Johnny Goo, both boyishly innocent and limp-wristedly spunky. I get the feeling these guys spent their teenage years detesting the grunge-rock all around them ... pimply adolescents, holed up in their bedrooms smoking Camels and listening to the Faces and Dolls (and maybe some Replacements,) wishing they were rocking back in '75 instead of being born around that year. All the lyrics seem to deal with life on the edges of show business: drugs, hero worship, unworkable relationships. "Hey, set them up, roll them over, smoke your cigarette like Ann Margaret." Now if they'd only lose the eyeliner... - Jim T.

DJ CAM - *Mad Blunted Jazz* (Shadow) As the name suggests, this is great music for putting some highway miles on your favorite bong. Packaged as a two CD set, there is one studio, and one live CD of instrumental, Jazz driven Trip-Hop contained within. Loose, smooth Hip-Hop style beats are used. There are no hard techno beats here. Samples range from Sitar, to flutes, to soap opera strings. There are live piano and vibes on almost every track giving this recording a feeling of continuity throughout. If you are slightly less than straight-edge, and not in the mood to decipher ebionics, pack another bowl and experience Mad Blunted Jazz. - TMF.

DADDY LONGHEAD - *Super Masonic* (Honest Abe's Custom Records) This is the most whacked-out 70's sludge rock since Monster Magnet. The band is a trio with Jeff Pinkus from the Butthole Surfers on bass and vocals, and with that in mind, I didn't think I'd find *Super Masonic* so focused and so... well, rockin'! "Raisin" drips of Sabbath and both "Undertaker" and "2nd Hand Noose" are boogies that would make ZZ Top proud. Big shot o' sludgy retro! - Johnny Puke

DANIELSON FAMILY - *Tell Another Joke At The Ol' Choppin' Block* (Tooth & Nail) This is a real-life family of five siblings ranging in age from 12 to 24, and one honorary member. They perform in an undisciplined manner, in a style which suggests they are all kids, or their music is directed at kids. It's telling that the founding member and eldest brother, Daniel Smith, was once in a noise band. For me, this was something to get out of the house and send to a friend, hoping he'll still be a friend after he gets it. But kids into a wider variety of sounds might dig it. - Rodney Leighton

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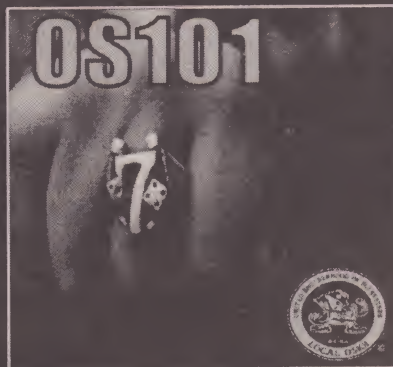
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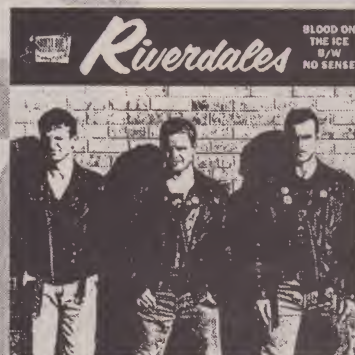
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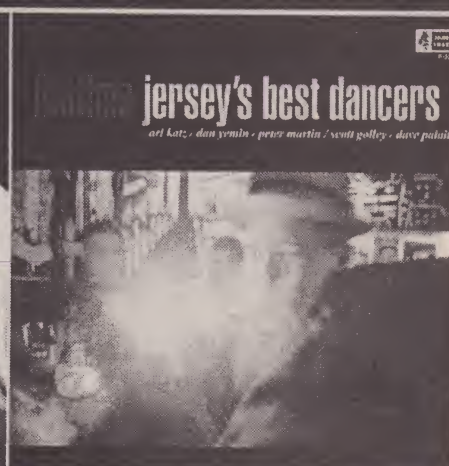
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DARKSEED - *Spellcraft* (Nuclear Blast America) European Gothic metal (that's right, I said Metal). Pretty standard stuff. Musically they're better than average, the vocals are what kinda turned me off to it (very commercial sounding). They might be worth trying if you like the genre - Gary Mc.

DAVER - *Two Years of Being Singles (The Singles Compilation)* (Modern Relic Records, PO Box 637, Joliet, IL 60434-0637) Really cool, bouncy pop music. Well produced, enjoyable, and listenable, for the most part. "Alexandria," however, is an exception, sounding very much like the top-40 music of the 1970s, which I despised. - Paul Silver

DAVISS COUNTY PANTHERS - *Je N'Aime Pas Beaucoup Ma Gamelle* (Sonic Bubblegum, PO Box 35504, Brighton, MA 02135) Interesting album which meanders in style between math rock, jazzy stuff, and heavy pop. Mesmerizing guitar drone and passionate vocals hypnotize the listener. This disc will find its way back into my CD player many times to come. - Paul Silver

DEAD FAMILY - *We Are A Dead Family* (1969 Records) Brooklyn punk rock. Sometimes sounds a bit Ramones-ish except with a morbid kinda sound. - Eva Silverman

DEATHSTAR - "Self-Titled 10" (Silver Girl Records PO Box 161024 San Diego Ca. 92176) This ear-catching release displays the several musical sides of Deathstar. The record begins with three somewhat poppy, jangly guitar songs with vocals that struggle, but do manage to barely float above the tight sounding song structure. It is a sound that is fairly recognizable, for it has elements of noise-pop, similar to that of Archers of Loaf, among others. However, the tracks do stand on their own merit, and remain interesting due to a nice mix of volume and energy. The song that stuck with me was the opener, "Stride Rite". The flip side speeds the pace up a bit and the songs have a more raw feel combined with a sharper bite, particularly on "Danimal" and "Ever Faster Clip". Overall, a very solid release from a band worth hearing more from. - Rich Quinlan

DELTA 9 - *Disco Inferno* (Earache) This is that really fast electronic dance (more like seizure dancing) music. But unlike Disciples of Annihilation (further down the page,) this can be listened to. Another intense release from Industrial Strength. - Gary Mc.

DEMOLITION DOLL RODS - "Tasty" (In the Red Recordings 2627 E. Strong Pl. Anaheim, CA 92806) I don't think this recording was meant to be a joke.... But it certainly turned out that way. Two girls and a drag queen doing their spin on punk/alternative music.... Tee, hee, hee.....uuugggh. - Stacey H.

DINOSAUR JR. - *Hand It Over* (Reprise) Gee, it seems like it's been forever since J has graced us with his musical presence; at least two or three years. And as far as I'm concerned *Hand It Over*, is the best thing he's done since *Green Mind*. It just seems a lot less formulated than J's last two releases. J used some extra instrumentation such as a mellotron on the track "Alone" and banjos on "Gettin' Rough". I was starting to get real tired of Dinosaur, but *Hand It Over* has got me hooked again, and has renewed my faith in Mr. Mascis. - Rick K.

THE DICK BOYS - *What Do You Want For Nothing?* (PO Box 80091, Charleston SC 29416) Fans of obscure NY garage rock may remember Long Island's The Cranks. A few years ago, Jim from the Cranks moved to Charleston and soon became transformed into a local radio character called "The Critic." The Dick Boys are a garagey rock vehicle for The Critic's unashamedly sophomoric sense of humor. Songs range in subject matter from turkey bastards to masturbation to prescription drugs and litter. A few songs are sung by another radio pal of The Critic, pro surfer Scott Hantzke, and those don't fare as well. Overall, if you're into silly songs and 60's garage, you'll dig this CD. - Johnny Puke

DISCIPLES OF ANIHILATION - *New York Speedcore!* (Earache) If anyone sampled that *Industrial Fucking Strength* compilation last year, then you'll know what I'm talking about here: Painfully insane electronic music, approx. 5 million beats per minute) that's just beyond listenable. - Gary Mc.

DITCH BANK OKIES - *Honk If You're Elvis* (Road Apple Records, 287 1/2 Orizaba Ave., Long Beach CA. 90803) Do you like the Cramps, Rev Horton Heat, Elvis Hitler, or Mojo Nixon? You do!?! GOOD! Because the DBO rule! Their style of music is known as Psychobilly or as I call it... great! Some stand out songs are: "Idaho," "Fishing Song" and the secret tracks (I'd tell you what they are but, that will ruin the surprise). Definitely recommended. - Gary Mc.

DODGEBALL - *Hooray For Everything* (Goldenrod Records, PO BOX

some Fat-Wreck band; the guitars, vocals, drumming, everything. But the rad thing is that Dodgeball is everything I love all in one. Crunchy, loud guitars with scratchy female vocals. Great cartoony artwork - all around fun except that it's supposed to be an enhanced CD and nothing happened when I tried running it on the PC. - Dave Thirsty

DOWN BY LAW - *Last of The Sharpshooters* (Epitaph) Dave Smalley epitomizes two traits in my mind - consistency and integrity. His songs always ring true and every album he's made with Down By Law (now a trio on this release) has been a winner, and this one is no different - driving, melodic, and with a message. There are several political songs on this album - "Get Out," about the British occupation of Northern Ireland, and "Urban Naplam," about racial unrest (set to a ska beat,) but most of the songs stick to what Smalley does best: Dealing with his own demons and passing along whatever wisdom he's found to his listeners. There are songs about working for a living and working to make relationships last, and most of all, song about being yourself. He says it best in "The Cool Crowd:" "I'm going to do what I want to, going to play what I want to, so at the end of the day I can look back and laugh." - Jim T.

DR. RING DING & THE SENIOR ALL STARS - *Dandimite!* (Moon Ska) Tipping their hats to the beginnings of ska, Dr. Ring Ding and the boys have put together a great album of traditional roots Jamaican. Ska good enough to get Derrick Morgan and Judge Dread to become involved. I don't have to tell the rude boys how good this is, they already own it! - Gary Mc.

THE DRAPES - *The Silent War...* (Onefoot Records) This Portland, Oregon based band plays heavy, crunching yet repetitive hardcore. While the band has a thick, relentless sound, the riffs seem too familiar and the vocal delivery is too gruff, lacking the ability to create memorable hooks. This is a shame, for lead singer Nathanael Cameron has written some highly personal and intelligent lyrics. The honesty of "Yesterdays" and "Jimmie" will grab your attention, but unfortunately, the musical prowess to support these great lyrics is not there yet. Their finest moment comes with their version of Poison Idea's "Taken By Surprise", which the Drapes attack with boundless energy. If they could show the same power with their originals, this would be a much stronger album. - Rich Quinlan

DREAD MOTIF - "Love Songs from the Abyss" EP (PO Box 575, Bergenfield NJ 07621) This incredible self-release features some of the finest romantically paranoid lyrics I have ever heard. Dead Motif deliver five scathing, hate-filled, sarcastic tracks that will help you remember why you're better off alone, all aggressive, intelligent, and emotional. On the surface, it would seem that five songs about the relatively same topic could be repetitive, yet each song here has its own feel and stance. The band shows a nice range of moods throughout the disc, moving from the slower, self-searching of "Distortion Clouds my Mind" to the speedier "Nothing is Forever". One constant in each of these songs is the lyrical brilliance. Singer David Emmitt's writing is poetic, honest and occasionally disturbing. Check out "All the Dogs Learn to Read" and "Nothing is Forever" for truly masterful work. This is negative, haunting and definitely worth picking up. - Rich Quinlan

THE DRUGS - (Ng/BMG) When I see a band named The Drugs, I expect a lot from them. I mean, the name, for me, says it all. But these losers don't come anywhere near to living up to the moniker. They may do drugs, but drugs really don't make you cool. You have to be inherently cool to be cool on drugs. These guys suck. Badly. Well, actually they do a great job of sucking. It's just another rehash of that Stone Temple Pilots/Alice In Chains bullshit, two more examples of bands that haven't a clue how to be cool on drugs. But what do you expect from a band that hides a member of Every Mother's Nightmare, a hideous late-80's cockrock hair band that had a fleeting brush with success? The same guys that wore spandex and hairspray are now getting tattoos and piercings, cutting their hair off and dressing in black. The music is no better, just darker. Who gives a crap. All of this shit is boring and it too like Motley Crue and their ilk, will find a place to crawl off and die. -David Brock

DRUMS AND TUBA - *Box Fetish* (T.E.C. Tones, 109 Minna St. Suite 209, San Francisco, CA 94105) Interesting but ultimately worthless effort by an experimental trio featuring Brian Wolff on tuba and trumpet, Neal McKeebey on electric guitar, and Tony Nozero on drums. First of all, their songs generally end up being uninteresting jam-a-thons or lifeless prog-rock compositions. Yes, McKeebey's manic shards-of-feedback sound is pretty damn cool, but it's usually drowned out by Wolff's goofy Dixieland-style approach to electric bass riffs. A few good things start to happen when Wolff starts blowing some primal weirdness on songs like "Lotteria" and "Kuc To Luc," but otherwise the tuba and the guitar don't generate much excitement together. The only worthwhile song on *Fetish* is "Meat," where Wolff's bouncy trumpet licks work well with McKeebey's able rhythm guitar, but in the end, that tune sounds like a castoff from a Keystone Kops

DRYWALL (1983 W 7th St, Brooklyn NY 11223) Bratty pop-punk from Brooklyn. The band seems quite talented and the production is top-notch on both the four studio and four live tracks. "Hole In My Soul" includes some nice rumbling surf guitar and drums, and there's a hint of Sixties garage-rock influence throughout. The live material seems a bit rougher and more aggressive but still fun. - Jim Testa

DUOCHROME - ADIDAS (Da Da) A collection of recordings that they were supposed to have out on a 7 inch every time I'd see them, so finally here are all those efforts rolled up in one CD. The first half goes by pretty nicely with a Pavement-type sound. The guitar work is cool and there are some definite indie hits. From what I hear, these guys are snappy dressers too. They could have left a few of these tracks off, but in all this is a good debut full-length release. Duochrome are definitely a lot better than a lot of those half-assed low-fi bands out there. - Dave Urbano

DYSLEXIC APACHES - Fake Angst and the Teenage Blowtorch (Fuse, PO Box 578497, Chicago, Illinois, 60657) Bad rock which sports only one semi-amusing gimmick: there's 9 songs listed on the back of the CD, but the CD player reads 33, 24 of them being the same song over and over again. - Paul Barger

STEVE EARLE AND THE SUPERSUCKERS (SubPop) After meeting at Farm Aid, Steve Earle (who is one of the most amazing songwriters I have ever heard) and the 'suckers discovered some mutual admiration and decided to record, together, and this here's the result. Though it's only 5 songs (WAY TOO SHORT), this (along with the 'suckers new disc, "Must've Been High"), has barely left my side (or my cd player actually) since I got 'em. Earle sings on the 'suckers "Creepy Jackalope Eye", while Eddie and the boys give Earle's "Angel Is A Devil" a spin 'round the block, then Earle leads the guys through a scorching cover of the Stones' "Before They Make Me Run." My only complaint is the length. I wanted MORE MORE MORE!! But with any luck we'll see more progeny from this union. Like, maybe an entire LP's worth...Oh yeah, just a little warning- this stuff leans toward the country side of the street. A good thing, but there's still those out there who have no idea of what real country is and they think they hate it. Youpreach about how open-minded you are- prove it.... - David Brock

EASY BIG FELLA - Eat At Joe's (Moon) Ska from the land of Grunge (Seattle). Good ole mid-tempoed, foot tapping Ska. They're good but just not great. - Gary Mc.

EDGE OF SANITY - Infernal (Black Mark Prods. Luxemburger Str.31 D-13353. Berlin, Germany) That's right, ole Gary is reviewing another slab of Black Metal (Well, I like the stuff so PISS OFF!) But between you and me... (pause for laughter) Edge Of Sanity are just a little too abusive for my ears. - Gary Mc.

EDISON - Picture Postcard (Reprise) Edison play alterna-rock with an emo feel to it. If you liked Texas Was The Reason, then you'll probably dig these guys. (It was produced by J. Robbins at Oz studios in Baltimore, same as Texas, so there ya go.) - Rick K.

MARK EITZEL - West (Warner Bros.) West is Mark Eitzel's 2nd full-length since his split with American Music Club and this time it's more of a return to form than last year's jazzier *60 Watt Silver Lining*. West is a collaboration with REM's Peter Buck (along with musicians from Buck's other project, Tuatara,) and is similar to AMC's later records like *Everclear* or *San Francisco* in that West is a fine collection of Eitzel's moody soundscapes and one glaring attempt at a radio hit. Regardless, West is amazing, as if one could expect anything less from an Eitzel project. What is more amazing is that all 12 songs were written by Buck and Eitzel in two *freaking* days in Eitzel's hometown of San Francisco. - Johnny Puke

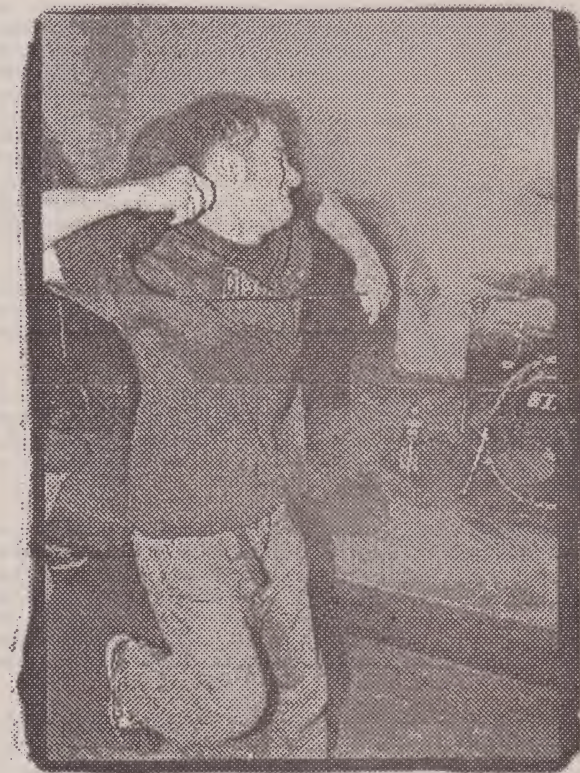
Classic laid-back rock. Like if Bruce Springsteen decided to relax and play something lighter, more adult contemporary oriented. Kinda dull. - Paul Silver

ELECTRIC FRANKENSTEIN - Sick Songs (Nesak Int'l) While Jersey's own Electric Frankenstein's brand of punk rock verges dangerously close to cock rock, I have to admit they are about equal in quality to the musically similar New Bomb Turks. To me, their *Conquers The World* CD from last year contained more awesome songs, but this release is still consistently good and includes the excellent singles "Action High," "Not With You," and "Out There (F-Word.)" New singer Scott (ex-Verbal Abuse) may not have as strong a voice as the original singer, but with solid material to work with, I don't think EF fans will be disappointed. - Rick Spithoff

leather....bodies flailing and jerking on the fast ones, pulsing slow but just as hard on the slower numbers. Mmmmm. What's that? Across the dance floor? You know....you're right. That DOES look like Girls Against Boys. But what would they be doing here? That's funny..... - Mike Fournier

ENTOMBED (Earache Records) A greatest hits album from these heavy metal veterans consisting of 12 songs from EP's, 7 inches, and regular albums. It's excellent! There's a pretty good cover of Kiss' "God Of Thunder" and the first track, "Out of Hand," is amazing 'cause it just knocks ya down as soon as you put it on. The last three songs aren't all that; they don't necessarily have a focus point and all sound like noise. - Phil Pinto

ERIC'S TRIP - Long Days Ride 'Till Tomorrow (Sappy Records, Po Box 25097 Moncton, NB, Canada E1C 9M9) This collection of B-sides, live tracks and unreleased songs will act as a farewell for this great band. Eric's Trip always played music with many different personalities-noisy, harmonious, quiet, or pounding, and they occasionally had all of these components rolled into one song. Long Days Ride gives you over an hour of music, going as far back as "Dreaming", the song that kicks the disc off, from their first cassette in 1990. Other glowing tracks are a live version of



HARVEST

Photo by Justin Borucki

"September", an unusual tune called "Fell", "Float", and "Spaceship Opening", taped during their final tour. Long time fans of the band will need this, or if you were like me, and were late in finding out about this band, this compilation lets you appreciate how good they could be. There is fantastic diversity among the songs here, and this is definitely worth having. - Rich Quinlan

MARIANNE FAITHFULL - 20th Century Blues (RCA) Berlin. 1930's. It's a wet, raw night and the knife-like wind seems determined to cut through to your bones. You look for a place to escape the cold and the damp. Any place. You float on the sounds of laughter and clinking glasses into a dingy street level cabaret. The lights are dim, the air is filled with cigarette smoke and the smell of liquor. Okay, enough of the dramatics. But that's all that ran through my mind while listening to this CD, and for good reason- the CD's subtitle is "An Evening In The Weimar Republic", which sprung up in the wake of Germany's near-destruction at the end of World War I and came to an end with Hitler's rise to power in 1933. Marianne Faithfull's bourbon-and cigarette-scarred voice is a perfect match for the songs here that are mostly tunes written by Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht, (some of

which will be very familiar to the average schmoe, like "Alabama Song", "Mack The Knife" and "Falling In Love Again") though other songs that invoke the feel of that eraby the likes of Friedrich Hollaender, Noel Coward and Harry Nilsson are also included. Lacking both sentimentality and self-indulgence, Faithfull seems to understand, rather than judge, Weill's characters and their demented sense of morality. Dark, sensual, and at times, soul wrenching. When you gaze into the abyss, the abyss also gazes into you. - David Brock

FALL FROM GRACE (Mayhem/Fierce) Melodic metal with low tunings. Sound predictable? It is, it's another band trying to get those mosh parts into every 'cause it's what everybody else is doing. The music isn't bad, except for the singing, which is a cross between Alice In Chains and any old-school metal vocalist. - Phil Pinto

FALLING WALLENDAS (IMI 541 N. Fairbanks Court, Chicago, IL 60611) **MARCY PLAYGROUND** (EMI) Why these two bands get clumped together into one review? (1) Both releases are self-titled. (2) Both bands are a little bit silly. (3) Both could comfortably be played at any 'alternative rock' station you'd care to mention (though, to be fair, FW uses more distortion than the country-tinged/Tom Petty-ish MP). (4) Both are coffeehouse-friendly. (5) Both leave very little in the way of lasting impression. (6) Writing two reviews that basically would've said the same thing (painfully mediocre) is considered cruel and unusual punishment in some third world nations (7) both discs are destined to be drink coasters, as no one will give me a nickel for these CD's. - Mike Fournier

FEAR FACTORY - *Remanufacture* (Roadrunner) Fear Factory have become known as the perfect blend of metal and industrial. Through the teaming with producer Rhys Fulber (Frontline Assembly, Noise Unit,) the band has reached a unique point in their career - the top. Unfortunately, this remix album is only a distraction from the quintessential *Demanufacture*. On this slab of plastic, further electronic experimentation has taken the fury away from many of the songs, because the originals weren't meant to be played with hip hop break beats or turned into ambient soundscapes. I found it listenable once I lowered my expectations, but if you want to try this band, go for the original *Demanufacture*. - Gary McGarvey

FEVERDREAM - *You Don't Know Us, But We Know Who You Are* (Satellite, 920 East Colorado #151, Pasadena, Ca 91106) Atmospheric guitars not unlike some of the Cure's earlier work with cool blasts of sonic melody. The vocals remind some what of Richard Butler which is also a plus. Moody tunes that leave you feeling cool. - Rick K.

FIFTEEN - *Allegro* (No Records, PO Box 14088, Berkeley CA 94712) Recorded at this seminal Berkeley band's final show at Gilman Street, this farewell CD's proceeds will be donated to help feed Berkeley's growing homeless population. Fifteen were always a little different from the usual slaphappy Gilman Streeters in that their gritty songs addressed serious social issues. This is straightforward, no frills punk rock, and a good document of what the band sounded like live (if my memories of their long-ago ABC No Rio gigs can be trusted.) - Jim Testa

FILM STAR (Super Cottonmouth Records, PO Box 480555, Los Angeles CA 90048) If Trent Reznor had started a Blues/Noise group... Film Star's singer (no info offered) at times sounds like Mr. Nails, but at the next moment he sounds like he was mutilated by farm equipment. The music is a little too wallowing for my tastes. I wouldn't go out of my way to look for this one. - Gary McGarvey

FINAL CONFLICT - *Rebirth* (Tacklebox/Cargo, 4901-06 Morena Blvd, San Diego CA 92117) Hard-edge punk from California. The vocals are excellent, the type that kicks you in the ass and gets you out of bed. The songs alternate a lot of tempo changes, breakdowns, and so on. Drum & bass work is excellent and very tight. - Phil Pinto

FIREWORKS - *Lit Up* (Last Beat Records, 2819 Commerce Dallas TX 75226) Darin Lin Wood, the leader and singer of Dallas band Fireworks, has played with various bands, ranging from early incarnations of Cop Shoot Cop to '68 Comeback. Now, finally, he has a band to himself, in which he is free to experiment as he wishes and follow no one's rules but his own. That is the mentality behind Fireworks, a highly prolific band that has released more than twenty efforts over the past three years. The band also features the guitar work of James Arthur and fantastic drumming by Lin Wood's girlfriend, Janet Walker. Musically, the band has a stripped down, basic rock and roll sound that takes no prisoners. While there are elements of blues (Wicked Woman), and some rockabilly ("Raw Deal"), the band defies being thoughtlessly labeled. Instead, they play old fashioned guitar rock full of dirt, speed, sweat, and attitude. The lyrics are gruff, the guitar work sounds like sand paper, and the drumming is relentless. There are other bands doin this, and there are moments here when you have heard all

groans and shouts his way through the chaos until something resembling an organized song emerges and destroys you. The disc, while not always doing the band justice as a unit, I think drops very enticing hints as to what this band could be like in a live setting. They would be an act to check out. - Rich Quinlan

FIVE EIGHT - *Gasolina* (Velvet, 740 Broadway, NYC 10003) To this band's credit, they have slugged it out, touring often through the dives of the south. They have stayed a band playing their own style through grunge and a half dozen other trendy sounds of the week. Unfortunately, somewhere along the line, their music began to suck./ When I used to see these guys in the early Nineties, they had the tightness and harmonies of Husker Du and the barefoot snotty stage antics of No FX. Now, *Gasolina* is a collection of calculated, commercial alt-rock, crappy rock ballads, and plain whiny dreck. In fact, the whole album - and in particular, the first cut, "Stanley" - smacks of another Georgia also-ran, Guadalcanal Diary. Anybody remember them? - Johnny Puke

FLAKE - *Wild Cool Anger* (Y Records, PO Box 20241, Seattle WA 98102) When the material on this cd works, Flake cranks out hip, simple power pop for the Nineties. However, when it fails, it fails horribly, and reduces the band to generic AOR boredom. Unfortunately, the latter is true for most of this disc. There is simply not enough meat on the bones of these songs to make this trio sound aggressive, nor enough bounce to make them truly poppy. There are a few instances where the band bridges power and finesse with success, especially on "This House", "The New Guy" and "Equal Beast". Each of these are two to three minute bursts of unpretentious fun. However, three songs do not carry a record, and this is a disappointment

FLATUS - *Aural Fixations* (Black Pumpkin Records PO Box 4377 River Edge NJ 07661-4377) Crunchy punk-pop that is a cut above most bands of this ilk. Lyrically, the band will contemplate relationships with people and the world around them in songs like "My Choice", "Growing Old" and "Reality Check", or they will be completely ridiculous like "Talk Show Hero" and "Budget Beer". There is constant energy on this record, fueled by speedy catchy riffs which breed sing along pogo punk. Honest sounding punk with a nice elemnt of fun. - Rich Quinlan

FLIPP (Hollywood) Pretty rawkin tunes with good beats. The voice doesn't sound perfectly fitted for the music, but I like it anyway. - Eva S.

fluf - *Waikiki* (MCA) Yet another great release from this wildly talented and tragically underrated band. Outstanding guitar work and sharp drumming join together in perfect pounding unison. The songs range from moody to nearly metallic and each hit you hard - this is one of those naturally loud sounding records. Wakiki will rock your ceiling regardless of where the volume is. Anyone familiar with the late Olivelawn will recognize the aggression of singer/guitarist/songwriter O. Fluf has a thicker sound which really stands out on tracks like "Got Everything", "The Chooser", and "TV Anthem", just to name a few. This is a brilliant display of a band in complete control of their material, while still allowing their influences to shine through. Fluf pounds their harmonies into your brain, leaving them there to fester for hours after the disc ends. Really great stuff. - Rich Quinlan

Heavy alternative rock that works. Cool melodies and a soul make this the cream of the crop of alternative music. Shares a heritage with the great Olivelawn in the form of guitarist O. Fluf shares the some of the heaviness of Olivelawn, but has more of a pop sensibility. Many parts remind me of a slightly heavier, crunchier late-period Husker Du. Nice. - Paul Silver

I finally get to review one of my favorite bands, the all mighty Fluf. This is Fluf's major label debut, which really doesn't mean a thing considering they sound the same - big guitars, big hooks, and O's awesome baritone vocals that just kinda make your heart melt into goo. With lyrics like "girls are like chocolate can't you see, and they melt inside of me", from the track "chocolate", how could you not dig it. So if you don't have this already, go to your local record store and buy it, you cob nobbler. - Rick K.

FLUFFY - *Black Eye* (The Enclave) 14 songs of snotty mid-tempo punk rock delivered straight between the legs by four tough girls who could probably kick my ass. The songs and lyrics are interchangeable, with a few bright spots. Simple bar chord rock ala' the Ramones. - Frank Phobia

THE FLYING LUTTENBACHERS - *Revenge* (Skin Graft, PO Box 257546, Chicago IL 60625) My favorite hell-raisers are back. Chicago's Flying Luttenbachers, after promising to *Destroy All Music*, now return with *Revenge*, another savage dose of free-form, punishing jazz that is just as disturbing and powerful as their earlier works. Wild, post-apocalyptic noise screams through your speakers as this intense trio blasts away with "Spasms", "Murder Machine Music", and "Death Ray", just to name a few of the gems present. Chuck Falzone's guitar is more prevalent here, creating

the past. All of this release is amazing, but in addition to the songs mentioned, you must turn "Mercury Retrograde" up especially loud. Your neighbors will hate, you, but you will never be the same. All Luttenbacher fans will be pleased, and if you have not heard them, get this now, before the boys truly get their revenge. - Rich Q.

✓ **FRANKENFINGER** - *Fourty Hour Sea* (Cash Monkey Records, PO Box 15573, Tallahassee, FL 32317) Psycho psych-pop. Laid-back hippie-pop with a bit of a twisted sense of humor and a twisted musical sensibility. Both the music and the lyrics are off-beat. Each song keeps one's attention for all the right reasons. - Paul Silver

THE FOLK IMPLSION - *Dare To Be Surprised* (The Communion Label, 2525 16th St. 3rd Floor, San Francisco CA 94103) After the success of their 1995's Kids soundtrack tune, "Natural One," Lou Barlow and John Davis are back with some new pop recipes. . . kid tested and mother approved. The Folk Implsion write music that is terminally peachy. Take a pop song fit for the radio, reverse the strings on the guitar, replace the lyrics with words and phrases that actually mean something, and inject an undercurrent of overall quirkiness and you'll arrive at the heart of The Folk Implsion. This album is a lot of fun. Slow, dream-like pop that achieves its listenability through minimalism and good ol' fashioned raw talent. - Greg Matherly

THE FRANTIC FLATTOPS - *Cheap Women, Cheap Booze, Cheaper Thrills* (Pravda) I don't have any explanations for the glut in rockabilly bands in the past few years. Most of these bands are contrived, singing about things that they couldn't possibly have any real understanding of ("Hey daddy-o, gonna swing with my baby down at the malt shop, get it cat, yeah yeah yeah"). Now don't get me wrong, I LOVE rockabilly. But I love the real thing - Charlie Feathers, Ronnie Dawson, etc. Hell, I even like the good ol' Stray Cats. And I like these guys. They pound out that big beat without sounding like they sat around and memorized it from a stack of records (though, the odds are they did). They even get the thumbs up from The Blond Bomber himself (Ronnie Dawson, ya loser), who spits out a little intro thang on the topside of the record. Damn fine slab o' wax from these mad cats. Check it out. - David Brock

FRIENDLY CORNSHOCKER (Eerie Materials, PO Box 14592, Richmond VA 23221) A very ambitious 7piece experimental outfit which reminds me of Tragic Mulatto, but a bit more subtle. Throw together textures of drums, bass, guitar, banjo, muddy strange vox, harmonica, organ, trumpet, cornet, and other odds & ends and you've got this. A good soundtrack to a David Lynch film but a bit of an acquired taste. - Frank Phobia

FRIENDS OF DEAN MARTINEZ - *Retrograde* (Sub Pop) The scene is set: your driving down that same long, hot two-lane road in the American desert that attracts every other filmmaker, your thinking about the past, the present, and the future all at once, and you don't really know where your going and you don't really care. Then. . . wait, what's that music that's playing? That's the languid, southwestern sounds of Friends Of Dean Martinez. Since 1993 this band has been performing profound, sunset instrumentals that would make John Wayne look like an accountant. Bill Elm's steel guitar work creates rich fantasies that bloom horizon. . . and that ain't all the poetry that's being laid down. Friends Of Dean Martinez has a revolving line-up of esteemed, talented musicians that contribute to the dreams of the sweltering open road. In today's resurgence of lounge music, these guys are able to define themselves as refreshing and limitless. An instant road trip. - Greg Matherly

JOHN FRUSCIANTE - *Smile From The Stress You Hold* (Birdman) Aptly titled solo album from the guy who couldn't handle the pressure of being the Chili Peppers guitarist. John, there's one thing I must tell you - I also write songs for personal integrity's sake, I just don't let other people hear them. Hint hint. - Gary Mc.

FUEL - *Porcelain* (Media 5, believe me, you don't want the address) Sorry, this not the ragin' East Bay punk band from a few years back, it's a cheezy alterna-cockrock band who look like they get their fashion tips from MTV's House Of Style. I just thought I'd save you the trouble of explaining to the guy at the record store when you bring the disc back how these guys suck lemons. - Rick K.

FUELED - *In the House of the Enemy*, (Energy) This very pleasant surprise is a well orchestrated mix of electronics, metal, anger and noise. The band wisely does not rely heavily on the electronic aspect, instead opting to use keyboards and synth to create moods and atmospheres which allow each track to have its own personality. Musically, Fueled is a force featuring the vocals of Ron Shipes, whose bark reminded me of Tommy Victor from Prong, and the intense guitar work of Tim Howell. Tracks like "Fueled", "Savior" and "Penetrating Skin" have the band grinding out powerful,

articulate metal for the 90's. There are certainly other bands combining metal and electronic mayhem; however, Fueled keeps its sound fresh by knowing just when to add a twisted sample, or when to simply pummel you. These guys also understand how to write a catchy hook, most noticeably on my favorite track, "Dry". While there are occasions where the band lapses into areas of experimentation that come up flat, it is not for lack of trying. One example is the far too long intro of "Take the Pain", where the ambient soundscape seems out of place, or the overproduced closing cut, "Bleached," in which the band simply tries to squeeze too much out of one idea. These two details aside, one listen will show you that Fueled has created a tough, powerful album that is helping metal grow up, and allowing people to forget about their glam nightmares of the late 80's. - Rich Q.

FULLY / LADY LUCK - *A New Beginning* (JIT Records, PO Box 20300, NYC 10009) These two NYC-bred bands both feature notable names and dazzling skill. Sergio Vega, formally of Quicksand, leads the band Fully. The term post-hardcore gets tossed about far too easily sometimes, but this band does truly define what that phrase was supposed to originally mean. Fully is loud, heavy and aggressive, but their music is played with a sense of style and thought. The musical creativity here is outstanding as the band twists and turns its way through various tempo and style changes. They are willing to experiment while still remaining focused on their hardcore roots. Songs like "Buy and Sell", and "Virgo" are two examples of what the band can handle, but the real surprise comes in the form of an eight minute epic entitled "Magnum Opus".

Lady Luck features Roger Miret on bass, a man who made his claim as part of Agnostic Front. Lady Luck, while powerful and hard, is truly carried by stirring, gorgeous vocals. Denise Teperino has the ability to take over a song, as seen on tracks like "Disbelief", and "Shut Me Out". While Denise may be the center of attention, what happens around her also should be noticed, for like Fully, Lady Luck prides itself on strong musicianship and the ability to take hardcore into new and unexplored areas of harmony. These are two bands worth following. -Rich Quinlan

FUR - *Mira Mira* (Blackout!) If Cyndi Lauper was in a punk band (a good thing). - Eva Silverman

THE GAIN - *singreadysteadysmash* - Vinyl LP (Mighty, PO Box 1833, Los Angeles CA 90078) Snotty stuff that's equal parts garage-rock, pop-punk, adolescent testosterone, and adrenalin. Better than a double mocha latte to get you going in the morning. - Jim T.

GAPESPEED - *Project 64* (Silver Girl Records, PO Box 161024, San Diego, CA 92176) Cool, lo-fi indie-pop. Kind of quirky in some places, kinda math-ish too. Always challenging. Good stuff. - Paul Silver

GERALDINE FIBBERS - *Butch* (Virgin Records) Boy, what an anomaly: arrangements which alternate between lush orchestrations, slow, lilting country, and a more raw, bare-bones thrashy sonic attack, songs that range from engagingly wiggly to extremely morose to somewhat angry, a generally light and fluffy soft-rock sound with a few traces of rugged bull-blast rock'n'roll (the distorted, fuzzed-out guitar immediately springs to mind), and a very inconsistent tone which can't decide whether it wants to be subdued and introspective or more bitter and aggressive. The net result is an extremely uneven album that's primarily redeemed by the professional evident in the singing (the lead singer's thin, tremulous voice initially seems a tad annoying, but becomes more acceptable as the record progresses), the production, and especially the playing (the violins are exquisite). Too erratic and disjointed to be really solid and satisfying, but there's enough talent on display here to suggest that when these guys finally decide on a steady sound and attitude we can expect good things from them. - Joe Wawrzyniak

GOODBYE HARRY - *I can Smoke!* (Cruz) Scott Reynold is the singer in All, who are temporarily (?) on hiatus while the rest of the band tours with Milo in their old incarnation as the Descendents. That gave Scott time to make a new record with his own band, Goodbye Harry, whp play short, sweet, pop punk songs that remind me of Screaching Weasel a bit. - Eva Silverman

GRATEFUL - *Dead Fucking Last* (Epitaph) Punk, punk and more punk. One big 25 minute track of angry/fast/ four chord punk rock. I think every song mentioned the words 'dead fucking last'. An intermission. More punk rock. Kind of like one big song with two different parts. - Eva S.

THE GREAT BRAIN - *Algorithm* (Throwrug Records, PO Box 579100, Chicago, IL 60657-9100) Noisy, complex guitar structures dominate this sometimes uncontrolled, occasionally peaceful effort. Rough, rattling tracks like "Crack Blues" snuggle up nicely with less abrasive but equally interesting songs like "Gold Spot" and "You Became the Angry Chimes". There are hints of old style indie rock combining with pure bombastic squall

that reminded me of acts like the Cows or Jesus Lizard. The guitar work here sounds as if it's been tied to the rack, being stretched into inhuman contortions while the vocals remained muffled, buried under the low-fi hiss, as on the powerful "Eigenvector". The band is at its finest when it shocks you with unannounced power, as shown on "Strawberry Flan" and "Dry Socket," in which each track begins with reserved introductions before exploding into raw experiments. Very cool. - Rich Quinlan

GYPSY SUN (Lurch, 879 W Park Ave. #233, Ocean NJ 07712) I have to give this Jersey shore three-piece credit - they borrow from a lot of things I don't particularly care for, including funk and mainstream metal, but somehow flip those influences inside out into their own distinctive alternative-rock sound. Catchy, quirky, and quite bouncy. - Jim T.

HALF JAPANESE - *Bone Head* (Alternative Tentacles, P.O. Box 419092, San Francisco CA 94141-9092) Depending on who you listen to, Half Japanese's Jad Fair is either a genius or a talentless hack who has defrauded the alt-rock music world. Hell, even I subscribe to both theories, though on alternative days, of course. Regardless of the perspective you bring to Half Japanese's work, though, I'll tell you one thing for certain: there are few bands working on the fringe of the American underground today who are more innovative, creative or exciting as is Half Japanese, a statement proven by *Bone Head*. Working in a atmospheric milieu created thirty years ago by the Velvet Underground, Fair and gang have woven a complex, multi-layered tapestry of improvisational instrumentation, buried lyrics, lost sounds and vocals that range from Fair's Lou Reedish drone to altered nightmarish whispers and screams. The result is quite exhilarating, *Bone Head* a musical puzzle box that only reveals itself song-by-song. - ReverendK

It's been twenty-some years since singer/songwriter Jad Fair formed the first Half Japanese line-up. Today, Fair still writes quirky, simplistic pop tunes that never fail to extract whimsical certainties about love, joy, anger, sadness, and monsters. 21 songs -- all of which retain the innocent, unrestrained air of a high school garage band. - Greg Matherly

HANDS TIED (Equal Vision Records, PO Box 14, Hudson, NY 12534) Old school straight-edge hardcore with a vengeance. No faux hardcore heavy metal cross-over shit here. This is the real thing. 6 songs of fast and loud hardcore, complete with mosh parts. It may be considered a bit retro these days, but it's still great music. There's a hidden track at the end which is basically a throwaway, short surf thing. I wish someone would explain to me why bands continue to insist on putting these damned annoying "hidden" tracks on their CDs. - Paul Silver

HARVEST - *Living With A God Complex* (Trustkill, 23 Farm Edge Lane, Tinton Falls, NJ 07724) Jeez, except for the "I just hit puberty and my voice is changing, but I wanna grunt like the guy from Napalm Death" vocals, this is pretty powerful stuff. I'm sure that live, the vocals are mixed down with the sonic blasts of molten guitar riffage and heavy rhythm section. Personally, if I'm gonna listen to something heavy I'd rather just listen to Neurosis. - Rick K.

HASSASSINS - "Crash!" 10-inch LP (26 S. Carrollton Ave. Baltimore MD 21223) Well, goddamn. This here's a self-released 10-inch (no shit) which contains eight songs that don't rely on gimmicks or anything but the band's songwriting ability. And write songs they do. They're the kind that all of yr record-collecting scumbag friends would salivate over if they found this record at the Swap Meet, I think.....traces of really good sixties pop are there, to be sure, but the influences aren't heavy enough to get me stuck into thinking "they sound like (fill in the blank.)" Fun and devoid of pretense. - Mike Fournier

THE HEARTDROPS - *This Is The Heartdrops* (Melted, 21-41 34th Ave. #10A, Astoria, NY 11106) Simply divine. A three-piece straight outta NYC decked with 50's like/indie rock clothes and playing punk rock love songs. This is great. Crunchy vocals and guitar making this one feel quite soothing. -Dave Thirsty

HECKLE - *The Complicated Futility of Ignorance* (Hopeless Records, P.O. Box 7495, Van Nuys CA 91409-7495) File under H, as in Hardcore. But before you stick this one into your moldy CD collection, put it into your player and listen close, kids. This is the kind of music that helped keep me sane 10 or 12 years ago. While the mainstream press ignores it, and critics whine that hardcore's done and over, I'm happy it's still a vital force in some lives. There will always be a role for this music, as long as kids grow up under the heavy sick sweetness of suburbia. You may scoff, but at least these guys are trying to make a difference, even if it is only in their own lives. Heckle is firmly entrenched in tradition. I apologize for being too out of the loop to know their whole story. But it's clear from the music that they have one, as well as a sense of history. The lyrics are about maleness, sexism, white male dominance. Scathingly critical of self and the poor

examples of others, these songs seize on classic hardcore topics. This is the sound of suburban maes waking up and urging each other into political consciousness. For those of you out there too jaded to see the value in that, don't bother listening to this. Instead, do yourself a favor and go check out a live show by this band or another like it. You may not like the music, have a "good time," or become a convert, but if you have your eyes open, you'll learn respect for the process. Lyrical content and vocals aside, what really holds this band together is the excellent guitar work. Synched up with precise drumming and a floor of bass, the guitar here is refined and powerful. Like much great hardcore, it takes the finer points of metal, chunky without trying to replace the bass, and trading the wankery of solos for excellent riffing and noise breaks. If Heckle were a car, they would be a '72 Olds Cutlass with all the work put into what's inside. More primer than paint job, all the work is in the engine which eats fuel like crazy but keeps everything cruising at 110 per. - Alex Saville

THE HI FIVES - *And A Whole Lot More* (Lookout!) Sounds like a poppier, more 50's-friendly Ramones. There's 16 songs, each about 2 minutes



HECKLE

Photo by Jim Testa

long, and not a single one begs you to take the Hi 5's too seriously. Imagine the house band from Arnold's on *Happy Days* having access to Sex Pistols-era punk. There's nothing to dislike here, but aren't there already about a zillion bands just like this? - Michael Chant

HOARSE - *Happens Twice* (RCA) Detroit's Hoarse provides a cheerful blast of frothy adrenalin-pop, heavy on the harmony choruses. They're not quite as clever or catchy as vintage Goo Goo Dolls but definitely on the right track. For what it's worth, this caught my ear and kept me glued to my CD player all the way through while I was rummaging thru a huge stack of discardable promo discs. Too bad they're on RCA so no one will ever get to hear this. - Jim T.

HOLY HAND GRENADE - *Smoked* (842 S. 2nd Street, #344, Philadelphia PA 19147) This hyperkinetic Philly trio blends the manic fizz of U.K. teenpunk acts like Supergrass and Ash with skintight two-part harmonies, rock-solid bottom beats, and the skewed lyrical sensibility of vintage Cheap Trick. Not a bad recipe for a frothy power-pop cocktail that will have you shaking, if not stirred. - Jim T.

HONEYDOGS - *Seen A Ghost* (Debris/Mercury) This appealingly low-key, laid-back, very unpretentious and reflective Minneapolis soft rock outfit make their major label debut with this warmly affecting winner. Slow,

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relaxed, meditative, slightly uneven (the album briefly loses its footing with a couple of tiresomely thrashy tracks towards the end), and often hauntingly melancholy (feelings of tremendous regret, unfulfilled longings, and extreme loneliness are explored with admirable depth and restraint), with good, clear vocals, tightly subdued low-fi arrangements (the simmering organ is quite lovely), an uncommonly ample amount of thoughtfulness, quietly endearing melodies, and a sweetly mellow, lulling, easygoing sound which combines raw, full-blast rock'n'roll with delicate, lilting country for a compelling synthesis, it's the perfect album to listen to when you're in the mood to take a load off by sitting back, chilling out, and losing yourself in some arrestingly bittersweet music. - Joe Wawrzyniak

HORNY TOAD - *Thirteen* (Domo, 245 Spalding Dr, Beverly Hills CA 90212) Sorta-ska outfit (feat. Ex-Suicidal Tendencies gtr Louichi Mayorga) from L.A. They show a lot of reggae influence, but when they stray away from it, they lose me. Horny Toad do know how to get funky with the songs "Eggfart" and "Brick(house Commodores)." It's got its moments, but I wouldn't go out of my way to look for it. - Gary Mc.

HUEVOS RANCHEROS - *Get Outta Dodge* (Mint, PO Box 3613 MPO, Vancouver BC Canada V6B 3V6) In the vein of Dick Dale, Link Wray, and the Ventures comes another great bunch of musicians keeping the instrumental surf/garage sound alive. My only problem is that this album is way too short. - Gary Mc.

THE HUNS - *Live At The Palladium 1979* (Get Hip!) Still yet another re-release of a half-forgotten old band - from Austin, TX in this case. Fast, short, loud songs with ripped off Buzzcocks riffs by pissed-off teenagers fill this CD. Interesting, but unless you're from Texas, hard to believe you'll be going out of your way to track this down when there are so many new bands playing this same type of punk. - Tom B.

IDK - *Taking On The Monster* (Earache) A 5-song EP from these Jersey locals that expresses basic punk angst. Alienation, independence, and the DIY attitude are all explored and presented in a "this is what's on my mind" style of songwriting and singing. Not bad, but Red's vocals can be really annoying at times. - Tom B.

It's a five song cd-ep with one of my favorite songs from the early 90's... "Fireman Song". I remember seeing this band play at Studio One in Newark, NJ like every other month and they kicked ass. Then a while later I heard one of their seven inch records and thought it sucked. Well, now it seems Red and crew have things back into shape with solid East Coast hardcore/punk songwriting. The band sounds tighter than ever and even if the singer's voice is somewhat irritating, I.D.K. (I Don't Know) has a bright future ahead of them. - Dave Thirsty

IGGY AND THE STOOGES - *I'm Sick Of You!* (Bomp Records, P.O. Box 7112, Burbank, CA 91510) This

is a collection of 3 late 1972 *Raw Power* demo songs that were rejected by the Stooges record label, Mainman, and 5 bonus tracks of the Igster performing the same songs live. "I'm Sick of You" starts as a slow ballad and steadily mounts until it reaches blistering Iggy mode, then calmly returns back to the harmonious ballad. The crescendo starts to drag with riff overkill and is probably revealing the same area that first lost the record suits who were calling the shots. "Tight Pants" is the original title and version of *Raw Power*'s "Shake Appeal" and "Scene of The Crime" is one of those Stooges songs that sound great, but the desire to hear it again is forgotten the next time you hear "T.V. Eye" or "Search and Destroy." The live portion of the disc is a brief documentary on the three 1972 demo songs. Performed at various points in Pop's career (from 1978 to 1993), Iggy is found honing "Tight Pants" and "Scene of The Crime." He even corrects the incongruities of "I'm Sick of You" to render it a balanced, pure expression of Stooges lewdness. Overall, this disc is pretty interesting and the quality is not as bad as you would imagine, but unless you are a

die-hard Stooges collector, it's probably not worth the time. - Greg Matherly

ILL REPUTE - *Bleed* (The Edge, Box 7111, Oxnard, CA, 93031) This album just enlightened me to the fact that what I now consider to be "pop-punk" I once considered to be "hardcore". I guess that's because the East Coast kicked the West Coast's ass with the CBs Sunday matinee scene... Ill Repute have been around since the early 80s so I can't say they're ripping off the Face To Faces and the Ten Foot Poles of the world, but having heard those bands first... In fact, the lead track "Fallen" I so catchy and familiar I'd swear it was a Face To Face song. Melodic, upbeat pop-punk, um... hardcore. Definitely better than the R.E.M. sounding crap I review in the next few pages. (www.4paragon.net/~ir) - Shawn Scallen

IN FLAMES - *Jester Race* (Nuclear Blast America) More fine European metal, with those gargly (is that a word?) vocals that I like so much. Worth paying full price for. - Gary Mc.

IN FLIGHT PROGRAM (Revelation Records) 26 (count 'em) bands for a mere \$5 bucks. That's a bargain and a half. Includes the best that Revelation Records has to offer from yesterday and today. Judge, Sensefield, Texas Is The Reason, Civ, Gorilla Biscuits, Shelter and Inside Out, just to name a bunch. Definitely worth getting if you're a new or old fan of the real Hard Core. - Gary Mc.

INCH - *Dot Class "C"* (Headhunter/Cargo) This is Inch's second full length release and yes, it's absolutely fucking great! A great balance of edgy cold guitars, melodic hookage and pummeling bass and drums. If you like ever liked Helmet, Jawbox, or Superchunk, you'll love Inch. They take the best elements from those bands and come out with some of the best indie guitar

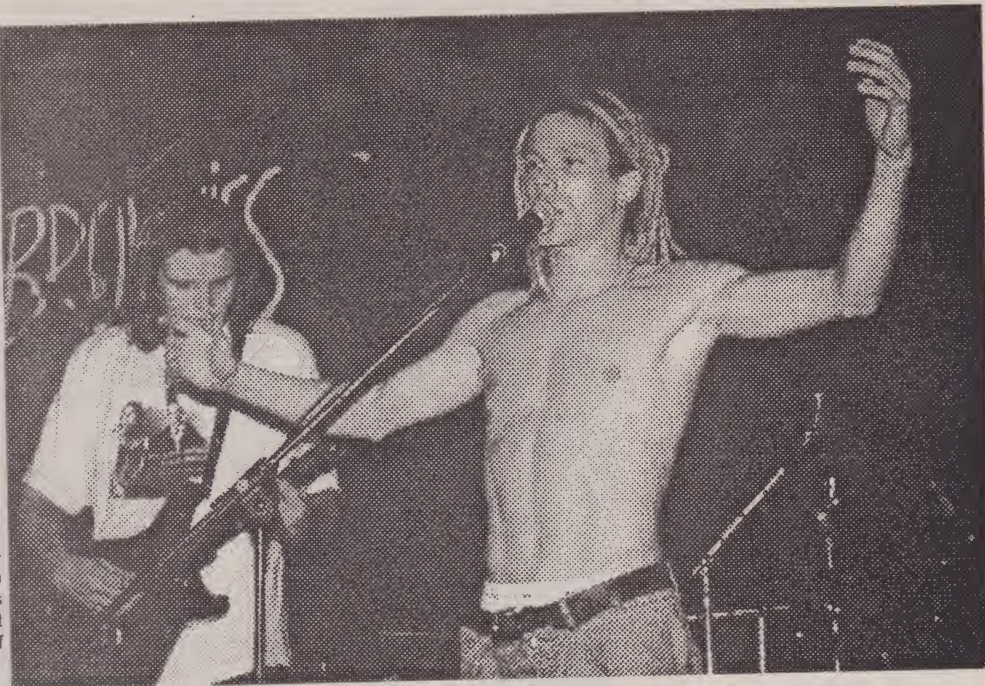


Photo by Jim Testa

JIMMIE'S CHICKEN SHACK

rock I've had the pleasure of listening to, period. Do yourself a favor next time your at the record store and you want to buy something that kicks ass from start to finish, look in section I for Inch. - Rick K.

INDIGO GIRLS - *Shaming of the Sun* (Epic) Many of this topsy-turvy decade's most troublesome issues -- the dismal failure of the multi-cultural "melting pot" theory, spirit-choking feelings of malaise and rootlessness, bigotry run grossly amuck, pent-up anger which explodes into terrifying violent outbursts, and so on -- are explored with strictly middling results by the infuriatingly uneven folk-rock duo of Amy Ray and Emily Saliers. Marred by a languid pace and an extremely heavy-handed, too-eager-for-its-own-good overeagerness, but the hoarsely affecting vocals, tautly harmonic arrangements, and sporadically striking lyrics ("Remember everything I told you/Keep it in your heart like a stone" goes the haunting refrain from "Everything In Its Own Time") stop this album from completely succumbing to its sometimes irritating preciousness. Still, that tiresome air of cloying

sincerity which rears its icky head on every Indigo Girls album has definitely got to go. Just barely worthwhile, but pretty demanding and not always easy to listen to. - Joe Wawrzyniak

ISAAC GREEN & THE SKALARS - "Skoolin' With the Skalars" (Moon Ska Records) Ska just isn't my cup of tea, but if it were, this might be the flavor I would prefer. Swimming past the shallow end of production, the Skalars hold their heads above water in the deep end with competent musicianship and tread along with fine melodies provided by the horn section. What sets this band apart from countless others in this genre is lead singer Jessica Butler's vocals, which reflect a more 60's R&B/soul influence. If the success of No Doubt opens doors for a new wave of ska bands, the Skalars should find themselves among the first to move into a bigger home. - Mike Harbin

INDEPENDENTS - *In For the Kill* (Rockduster Records, PO Box 10437, Greensboro, NC 27407) Gothic/Ska?! Probably. First time I've heard ska done like this. Definitely! Singer Evil Presly has an uncanny knack for sounding like Dave Vanian (Damned) which is cool for me, I like the Damned. Horror-filled ska music could be just enough to make even the most depressed Goth kid crack a smile. - Gary McGarvey

INTEGRITY - *Seasons In The Size Of Days* (Victory) This release is going to blow everybody's mind - 11 brutal tracks that way only Integrity can do it: Aggressive. People have been waiting a long time for this and it's worth every red cent you pay for it. To complement the music there is awesome artwork by Stephen Kasner, which is as evil and eccentric as the band's music. - Rich Hall

IVY - *Apartment Life* (Atlantic) Dominique Durand, the Paris, France-born lead singer for this top-rate Big Apple trio, has the damndest soprano: crystalline, delicate, and achingly pure, the woman's totally enrapturing pipes are in equal degrees elegant and ethereal. The music does Durand's remarkable voice full justice: grunged-up guitars, swirling strings, urgently blurring horns, and neatly simmering keyboards are adroitly used to create a sumptuously full, surging, highly sleek and polished pop-rock sound. The punchy, richly textured rhythms, the touchingly doleful tone affected by most of the songs, extremely elaborate and intricate arrangements, and the uniformly glossy production all make for one gorgeously classy effort. Seductive, supple, and simply superb, this album qualifies as an absolute irresistible beauty. - Joe Wawrzyniak

JACK ACID - S/T CD (New Disorder Records, 445 14th St, San Francisco, CA 94103) Anarchist punk with a mid-tempo feel. Male and female vocals angry with the world. Intelligent lyrics, especially on "Flag Song". Jack Acid is no more but they've left the punk community with a strong mark. - Dave T.

JAMIROQUAI - *Travelling Without Moving* (Work/Sony) 70's influenced soul/funk from England that sounds an awful lot like Stevie Wonder. While most of the stuff on this disc came off a little too contrived for me, once I got past the fact that it's not really Stevie singing, and listened to the music, I kinda liked it. - Rick K.

JEJUNE - *Junk* (Big Wheel Recreation, 325 Huntington Avenue #24, Boston MA 02115) Jejune plays driving, emotionally charged rock with a nice blend of tempo changes and instrumentation. The vocals remain fairly subdued, particularly when sung by bassist Arabella Harrison. Harrison and guitarist Joseph Guevara are a nice contrast here, for the two share vocal responsibilities with Harrison usually assuming the voice for the more melancholy, slower tracks such as "Greyscale" and "Ford". Harrison's voice is beautiful and adds real passion to the songs she sings. Guevara's vocal delivery is more jumbled stylistically, and lends itself well to the faster, more raw selections like "Meteorite", "Pablo" and "Indian Burn". Chris Vanacore's impressive drumming rounds out this cohesive and harmonious trio. Overall, Junk very cool album. - Rich Quinlan

✓ **JILFLIRTER** - *God Bless America* (SRG Records Group America,

Williamsburg Virginia 23185) This hauntingly passionate record comes from two Virginia brothers, Beard and Carter Bates. Together, the Bates create straight-forward yet emotionally driven songs with a remarkably full sound for a duo. This is stirring rock, which truly captures a "modern rock" feel. The brothers mix up the tempos quite well, introducing moods into each of the fourteen tracks, all written by Beard. Beard's lyrics dwell predominately in a spiritual realm, and his voice captures both pain and joy with equal vigor and clarity. "Live Again", "My Way", "Anyday" and "Dead Within" are all fine examples of the Bates' musical skills. This will be a pleasant surprise for most, and deserves to be heard. - Rich Q.

JIMMIES CHICKEN SHACK - *Pushing The Salminnilla Envelope* (Polygram) Twelve good funk/metal tunes. There is a lot of energy in all the songs. The bass has that "Flea-like" popping sound. Loud and heavy sounding guitars. Sounds a lot like Boston's Maelstrom. Must listen to with the volume up. - Den S.

JOAN OF ARC - *A Portable Model of...* (Jade Tree Records, 2310 Kennyswynn Rd., Wilmington DE 19810) Jade Tree strikes again with another release that is unique, slightly bizarre and enjoyably challenging. Joan of Arc create music and soundscapes throughout *A Portable Version Of...* that mix minimalist playing with samples, blurts of noise and mood shifts. You cannot help but to be intrigued by what this band is doing. The album is a study in contrast within each song, for the tracks here seem to be very simple on one level and amazingly complex at the same time. Offerings like "Let's Wrestle" feature lyrics that seem like stream of consciousness poetry mixed with noisy space-rock. My favorite track here is "Post Coitus Rock" which has its peacefulness shredded by soaring, scathing vocals. There are moments of lyric free noise such as "Romulous! Romulous!", the beautiful "Caliban" and the hypnotic tranquility of "Count to a Thousand". These ethereal efforts seem to flow out of your speakers, find a corner of your room and bury themselves there. This is by no means an album or a band for everyone. However, if you are bored right now with your collection and want to experiment, check out Joan of Arc. - Rich Quinlan

KATELL KEINEG (Jet) An extremely eclectic release in a wide range of styles, from clear, beautiful ballads to experimental noise to flat-out screeching. "One Hell Of A Life" is very good and something all of us can relate to. Another track is some sort of noise-chant that made my hair



JOAN OF ARC

Photo by Shawn Scallen

stand on end. I wanted to rip the CD out of the player and launch it towards Mars on that cut, but other songs made me eager to hear more. - Rodney Leighton

KEROSENE 454 - *Race* (Polyvinyl, PO Box 1885, Danville IL 61834-1885) This release is a compilation of older, hard to find material from this band. Seventy-three minutes worth of swirling guitar heavy sounds that includes

material from their Situation at Hand LP, assorted seven inches, and other unreleased tracks. Kerosene has slowly been building up a fan base outside of their DC-area roots. For those of you who have followed the band, you will note the musical progression the bands makes on this disc, as the songs here are taken from 1992-1994. Check out the tracks "What Was", "Dirt", "Stab Your Eyes" and "Down in Three" as examples of the style that this band possesses. - Rich Quinlan

KILLING TIME - *The Method* (Blackout) Good ol' NYHC by the masters themselves, with 18 new cuts (including the 'Unavoidable' 7-inch) that really gets you in the mood to have a fight with someone on Avenue C at 2:30 in the morning. - Rich Hall

KISS IT GOODBYE - *She Loves Me, She Loves Me Not...* (Revelation Records, PO Box 5232, Huntington Beach CA 92615-5232) This disc digs its nails into your throat from the opening scream on "Helvetica" and proceeds to musically mutilate you through nine punishing tracks. Featuring former members of Deadguy, Rorshack and Die 116, Kiss It Goodbye creates angered, disturbing music that shreds the sometimes limiting shackles of hardcore and incorporates huge amounts of guitar squeal, vocal eruptions, brief interludes of calm and uninhibited musical chaos. Their fairly lengthy offerings allows the band ample time to explore every conceivable dark aspect of life. This is a portrait of rage, intensity and a record that needs to be heard. This is also a band that I imagine must be incredible live. All of the material here is mandatory, but "Hartley", "Fire Drill", "Manthing" and "Sick Day" left me scarred. - Rich Quinlan

KNUCKLEHEADS - (Ransom Note Recordings, PO Box 40164, Bellevue, WA 98015) It's amazing how so many bands sound like NOFX. Knuckleheads can certainly be lumped into that category. They are very tight and I am sure they put on a good show. It's definitely good, if you like bands that sound exactly like someone else.....at least they execute that NOFX punk sound very well. - Stacey H.

WAYNE KRAMER - *Citizen Wayne* (Epitaph). My first exposure to Wayne Kramer's solo work and I wasn't too impressed. Pretty bland and hookless 70's rock. - Jon Clark

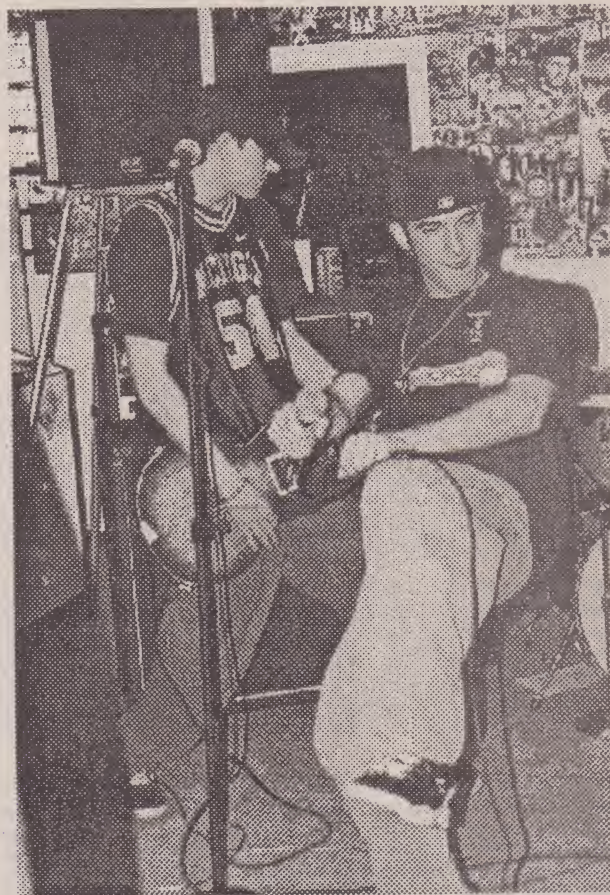
THE KRINKLES - *Three Ringos* (Mordorlorff Music, 1924 West Belle Plaine #2, Chicago IL 60613) Forget about all of this revisionist "lounge" crapola with all of its attendant paraphernalia like funky clothes, watered-down martinis and stanky stogies. There has never been a musical style built for partying like good old fashioned hairy-knuckled, mop-top late-sixties garage rock and don't you forget it. And since we're on the subject, the Krinkles have obviously done a bit of homework in this area, since their *Three Ringos* disc is a perfect amalgam of garage rock riffs and punkish energy. Lots of muddy harmonies, crunchy riffs and echoing rhythms abound on *Three Ringos*, making it a great album to play for friends or just piss off your parents. If songs like "El Presidente" or "Man O' Man O' Shevitz" don't get you up off your ass and shaking your money-maker then nothing will. - ReverendK

L7 - *The Beauty Process: Triple Platinum* (Slash) L.A.'s genderless fab four have come to the plate in 1997 with their most dynamic, risky, and mature release to date. Half of the tracks are toned down in the distortion department but not in attitude. Donita and Suzi share the vocal chores and weave their voices around chunky chug-a-long tunes with some clean surf-guitar textures. While "Drama," "The Masses Are Asses," and "I Need" slip into classic L7 mode, the surprise comes with slower, more subtle tracks like "Bitter Wine" and "Me Myself I." The band is now without founding member Jennifer Finch but L7 is still growing and have made a record they should be very proud of. - Frank Phobia

LAKE OF DRACULA (Skin Graft Records, PO Box 257546, Chicago IL 60625) This is deliciously bizarre. Lake of Dracula include themselves in a growing Now Wave movement which features blasts of free form noise blending in with well orchestrated instrumentation to create a disconcerting musical adventure. The band draws its membership from such legendary acts as the Flying Luttenbachers and the Scissor Girls. Eruptive waves of power suddenly rise from what sounds like apparent calm, particularly on "The Servo-Motor". There are elements of lo-fi, punk, experimental noise and free form jazz all rolled into one sonic milkshake of truly unique sounding stuff. This record digs itself into your skin and refuses to let go, constantly dark, heavy and disturbing. The most enjoyable aspect of this disc for me is the fact that you will hear something different with each successive listen, for the band is purposely reckless and takes chances to stretch its music into areas that most acts would be terrified to visit. While I loved nearly all of this, the real lasting impressions came from "Biographers of the Flaming Druglords", "Violators", "Coconut Wine", and "Memories of Me". Lake of Dracula cram eleven songs into a roughly seven five minute ride. Skin Graft continues to find stimulating, fresh acts to force upon an

unsuspecting world. This must be heard. - Rich Quinlan

LANCASTER COUNTY PRISON - *What I Love About America* (One Drinky Winky Records, 564 Sackett St., Brooklyn NY 11217) City & Western might not be a recognized genre down at Sam Goody's but it sums up Lancaster County Prison. The band's twangy tunes bounce along with touches of rockabilly and bluegrass and big slice of New York City attitude, perfectly delivered by lead singer John Carruthers. Some of these songs spoof standard country & western genres (the drinkin' song, the broken-hearted ballad, and "The Ballad Of Joel Rifkin," a country lament about the NYC serial killer) and others are just catchy c&w in their own right.. The



KNUCKLEHEADS

musicianship is first-rate and Carruthers just keeps getting better as a vocalist, whether he's whooping it up with tongue-in-cheek on "Fat, Old, Drunk & Proud!" or crooning his way through a straight rendition of some old folk song. He's ably abetted by bassist Mark DeAngelis and guitarist Roy Edroso, who both take lead vocals on a couple of tunes. - Jim T.

LAND SPEED RECORD (Resin Records, P.O. Box 5601, Washington, DC 20016-1201) A refreshing take on the Dischord sound. This Baltimore quartet injects plenty of energy and a little chaos into a post-punk subgenre that's grown a little too tight-assed for its own good. Add in a tendency to actually write songs about people and things instead of indulging in free-association wankery, and you have a definite winner. They also lighten things up by covering Robyn Hitchcock's "Uncorrected Personality Traits" and sprinkling in a series of goofy sample-based sound collages. There's no way I can imagine Shudder to Think doing that! One more thing: they've now turned into a trio, so Land Speed Record will definitely sound different live. - Rob Thornton

LARD - *Pure Chewing Satisfaction* (Alternative Tentacles) When you are the ex-lead singer of the Dead Kennedys, there's no such thing as forming another band. Over the years, Jello Biafra has collaborated with everyone from D.O.A. to Mojo Nixon to Nomeansno, but by far his best efforts was Lard, a supergroup composed of Biafra, Al Jorgensen, Paul Barker, and William Rieflin (all from Ministry.) From what I understand, this material was stuff not included on their first work, entitled "The Last Temptation of

Reid," and rightfully so. Although the songs are well put together, they lack that venomous, sarcastic bite of the prior material. This is just too cerebral. It's still worth hearing, it just doesn't live up to the first Lard effort. - Gary Mc.

LAZLO BANE - 11 Transistor (Almo Sounds, 360 N. La Cienga Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90048-1925) Non-descript pop music that doesn't excite me all that much. But at the same time, it doesn't repulse me like a lot of so-called "alternative" music out there these days. A cover of the Men At Work hit, "Overkill" appears on the disc, and doesn't seem out of place. They even use the original vocal tracks in part of the song. - Paul Silver

LENNY - "Please, Oh Please" (Rockflesh PO Box 1515 Nokomis, FL 34274) Bob Mould would probably like this band if he heard them...Lenny has that Sugar-like quality. Musically they are very interesting, although the vocals can be weak at times. This is a band that I would like to hear a few more recordings from, because like many bands they may just need some time to develop their sound. - Stacey H.

LICK 57's - And the Band played On... (One Foot Records, PO Box 3834, Cherry Hill NJ 08034-0592) If NOFX got a buck for every band that copied their style, they'd be millionaires (Not that they aren't heading in that direction anyway.) Florida's LICK 57's play quick guitar powerful punk and thrash with snotty vocals, a good amount of directed energy, and emotive songwriting. Some tunes have more impact than others while most stay in the goofy mode. A great deal of this is pretty good high-school power pop that the kids will always enjoy. Even the drop ins are worth a chuckle. - John Lisa

LIFE AFTER LIFE- Just Trip (Alternative Tentacles) Wow, what a new and great punk rock sound. Singer Jim Cert and drummer Jaroslav Sedivy were freedom fighters in Czechoslovakia. They bring to this country a sound best described as gypsy/circus punk. When was the last time you heard a punk rock accordion? Every song is a bomb waiting to explode. The entire disc is loaded with fast and furious punk. The two mentioned above were persecuted in their homeland for playing in bands that were not sanctioned by the state. That, fanzine reader, is true punk rock. - Den S.

LIFTER PULLER (Skene Records, PO Box 4522, St. Paul MN 55104) Slow, methodical tracks of dissident magic plod along with a thick low end, twangy, lo-fi guitars and sedate vocals. Lifter Puller create stirring minimal moods and then suddenly erupt with infatuating hooks that keep these potentially sleepy songs alive and stimulating. Tracks like "Bloomington", "Lazyeye", "Rental" and the faster paced "Solidgoldsole" tell lonely stories that will keep you enthralled. A disc full of solid, moving songs. Give this one a chance. - Rich Q.

LIFETIME - Jersey's Best Dancers (Jade Tree) One of Jersey's best return with a collection of ultra loud, relentlessly catchy punk on an album that ends way too soon. These guys rip through eleven songs in a scant twenty-five minutes. There are numerous highlights here, as Lifetime has greatly improved their playing, and the sound of this disc is far crisper than past efforts. While catchy punk is far from new, Lifetime can mix up their sound from bouncy, the terminally harmonious "The Boy's No Good", to blistering, most noticeably on "Bringing It Backwards". They also have a sense of humor, as seen on "Young, Loud and Scotty" and "Theme Song for a New Brunswick Basement Show". This is just quite simply great stuff. - Rich Quinlan

LILLINGTONS/NOTHING COOL "Split LP" (Clearview Records, 2157 Pueblo Drive, Garland TX 75040) This split release delivers two bands with incredibly similar sounds. Both of these bands borrow heavily from the Queers, mixing surf, punk, speed and less than serious lyrics. The Lillingtons play with less speed but are heavy on the goofy side. From the handclaps on the opening, "Nowhere Fast", to the 50's inspired plot of "For the Fun of it", the band will plant a smile on your face. This is basic, but easily lovable punk. Nothing Cool sound as if they just crawled off the "Kicked Out of the Webelos" 7". They are speedier and somewhat angrier than the Lillingtons. I liked every offering here, but check out the energy on songs like "Disconnected", "So What" and "Nothing Cool", an all too honest examination of what it means to play punk rock. This is a great release. Get it. - Rich Quinlan

LIFT - Lifelike (Daemon Records, PO Box 1207, Decatur GA 30031) This is music that tries very hard to sound important, but fails. Pretentious, bloodless, and boring. - Michael Chant

LIMP - Pop & Disorderly (Honest Don's) Green Day-ish pop punk about girls and growing up, with harmonies on the choruses. You can fill in the blanks for yourself - funny, catchy, bouncy, cute, etc. Nothing to complain about but nothing here that's going to help me separate Limp from the

other 47 million bands that sound like this. - Jim T.

LINCOLN (Polygram Records) Quirkiness in music either works or doesn't work, depending largely upon how pretentious or unpretentious the manner it's presented in. Here it works like a charm, thanks to the casual, off-handed, homespun manner used to showcase it. Of course, the catchy, clever, colloquial nutball lyrics (my favorite line appears in "Basketball": "Cool as Mister Freeze"), loose, languid, long-winding rhythms, handsomely mounted production, the impishly eccentric sense of humor evident in such wiggled-out tracks as "Sucker" and "Wish You Were Dead," the beautifully unadorned harmonica and acoustic guitar work, trebly, oddly appealing tenor vocals, a generally unclassifiable sound that's best described as funky-up country with heavy traces of rock and the blues in it, and the album's overall informal, insouciant, idiosyncratic tone doesn't hurt any, either. An utterly disarming corker. - Joe Wawrzyniak

LOGICAL NONSENSE - Expand the Hive (Alternative Tentacles) This relentless audio assault comes compliments of Jello Biafra's Alternative Tentacles Records, truly one of the pioneering indies of our time, and a label always willing to take chances. This release may destroy you. Logical Nonsense, a Santa Fe based sextet rage in a similar style of Brujeria and Sepultura. They combine hardcore intensity with incredibly heavy riffs and furious vocals. All of this creates a swirling world of damaging and penetrating music. The most impressive aspect of this disc is the bands' fluidity. It would be easy upon a quick listen to write this off as neo-death metal, but it is much more than that. These guys have formed a bond through eight years of playing together and the chemistry here is obvious. While they will certainly take pride in ripping the head off your shoulders with songs like "Death Approach", "Expand the Hive", "Head First" and "Hypo-Christian", they do know how to mix things up stylistically, creating moods and brief moments of tranquility before unleashing their fury. Very impressive. - Rich Quinlan

THE LONDON SUEDE - Coming Up (Nude/Columbia) Hearing the London Suede for the first time is probably a lot like discovering vintage Bowie. There's a classic rock sensibility topped off with a rich layer of otherworldliness. The London Suede is truly alternative in the sense that no one else sounds like them. Their compositions are amazing and their sound is infectious. Pick up *Coming Up*. - Michael Chant

LONGPIGS - The Sun Is Often Out (Mother Records/Island) Grunge music may have finally died out (everyone heave a collective sigh), but its relentlessly charmless, negative, pessimistic do-nothing vibes still live on, as this hideously bloated, lethargic, and overlong album glumly confirms. The shrill, high-pitched singing grates on the nerves with a brain-deadening vengeance, the brutally discordant, scruffed-up, repetitious arrangements leave a real shillload to be desired, none of the maddeningly self-indulgent songs has anything remotely interesting or insightful to say, and the overall tone of mewling, mawkish, pettish, all-consuming self-pity goes on for an unbearably protracted 40-odd minutes of sheer teeth-grinding hell. A miserable hunk of abrasive, off-putting sonic swill. - Joe Wawrzyniak

LOTUS CROWN - Chokin' On The Jokes (Reprise) Tame contemporary rock. Most of the songs are long, slow instrumentals. Whale sounding noises litter this disc making it kind of annoying to listen to. However, this is the sound if you need something to help you relax. - Den S.

LOVECRAFT - Vision (Big 1 Records, (201) 659-6616) Loose'n'funky slow soul music ain't exactly hugely abundant in this basically soulless decade, so this divinely righteous album comes across as a genuine surprise. Lovecraft, a splendidly soulful New Jersey punk quintet, lay on the groovy-ass good stuff by the mouth-watering bucketful: cool, clipped rap-style vocals, chunky beats, a completely kicked-back-to-near-catatonia tone, slow, sinuous rhythms which wind and grind like there's no tomorrow, stone cold aces instrumental arrangements (a nicely chillin' clarinet, wailin' harmonica, smoldering saxophone, wicked-ass wah-wah guitar, big, bad brass horns - they're all present and accounted for), coolly bumptin' tempos, tasty, taffy-thick grooves, and enough insanely-with-it vibes to make you crawl the walls all night long. Heavy, heady, and outrageously happening, this album's an earthy, smoothly groovin' blast. - Joe Wawrzyniak

LUCID NATION - The Stillness Of Over (Brainfloss Records, 1015 N. Kings Rd. #313, Los Angeles CA 90069) I really didn't know what to expect from this band. Hearing that they opened for Sleater-Kinney was a total plus though. Their sound without most of the mad distortion has a Sonic Youth like effect. Their core sound feels like Excuse17 and a bit like something from the Olympia, WA scene. The rad boy vocals sound a lot like Thurston Moore (especially on their cover of SY's "Youths Against Fascism"), and the rad girl vocals sound like a cross between the late Mia Zapata and the singer of Yum Yum Tree (if that isn't a mixture of bands, I don't know what

is). I really like the way their music combines all different sounds yet makes each song fluid and distinct. Lucid Nation's lyrics stretch the ideas for social equality and discusses the roles that we play in society. I was incredibly impressed with this CD and you will be too. - Eva S.

LUNACHICKS - *Pretty Ugly* (Go Kart Records) These luscious babes who powder their faces and parade across the stage covered with cute little girl clothing have popped out of a huge chocolate cake with a fun filled new album for their fans. *Pretty Ugly* has quite a different sound than the other two works in the glitter covered Lunachick portfolio. The latest album is mastered and produced by NOFX dude Fat Mike, and with that comes a



MIL MULLIGANOS

better equalized and more commercial sound. Lunachicks' fans can expect the same lovable fun-filled attitude with a sprinkle of reality. Songs like "Dear Dottie," "The Day Squid's Gerbil Died," and "Mr. Lady" are powerful, sparkling, punk rawk anthems that make you feel like you're walking down a city street on a bright sunny day with a feeling of empowerment and an "I'm going to conquer the world," happy glow. Glitter punk and so much more, that's what the new Lunachicks album is made of, and trust me, the fans will adore. - Eva S.

LUNGFISH - *Indivisible* (Dischord) Another great, hypnotic release from this band. Their music never ceases to amaze. Simple melodies with nice textures and counterpoints, repeated over and over without sounding monotonous. Instead, it draws the listener in more and more, until the pulsing melodies completely take over the consciousness. - Paul Silver

LUSK - *Free Mars* (Volcano Recordings, 71 W. 23rd St., New York, NY 10011) Many of the songs have a late (psychedelic) era Beatles feel, but with more thickly textured arrangements and electronics. Some of the songs are more standard pop than others. Others have strings, harp, trumpet, and other instrumentation. Each song, on its own, sounds cool; taken together, though, they do tend to sound a lot alike. A little more variety would have gone a long way to improving this album, which has an otherwise great concept. - Paul Silver

LUTEFISK - *Burn In Hell Fuckers* (Bong Load Custom) Fairly catchy noise-pop ala Flaming Lips. Sloppy, stoned out sound and 4-track recording make the record sound less than professional. -TMF.

MACHINEHEAD - *The More Things Change...* (Roadrunner) The album fits the title. This 2nd effort is much tougher and better put together than their first; even the vocals are meaner. Unfortunately, after the first couple of songs it became monotonous. It is worth a listen, just don't expect much. - Gary Mc.

MADE - *Bedazzler* (Universal/Canada) Godawful lazy rock with lazy vocals. Think really bad Pavement or Dinosaur Jr. Think about not getting this. I

think I need some coffee. - Johnny Puka.

MAGNATONE - *Magnatone* (No Alternative, 2217 Nicollet Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55404). 60's garage pop with a punk edge. Nothing mindblowing, but still pretty fun. - Jon Clark

MAN RAY - *Casual Thinking* (Mercury) This disc could easily be the soundtrack for any of the John Hughes teen films. The lead singer sounds like Peter Murphy. Half of the 11 songs are pretty good alternative style rock. The other half are slow, make out with your chick high-school dance ballads. "Iridescence" and "Smack" are the best bets on this disc. Good news, included on the CD is one of those ever so popular hidden bonus tracks. - Denis Sheehan

MARBLES - *Pyramid Landing (& Other Favorites)* (Elephant 6/ Spin Art) Plain and simple, this is a FUN record. A collection of light-hearted 4-track pop songs recorded by Robert Schneider of The Apples In Stereo in 1992 and 1993. Using an odd collection of low-tech, inexpensive, and somewhat unconventional instruments including sleigh bells, a Casio SK-1 keyboard, Sears Silver Rhythm toy drums, a sand filled envelope, and a Jay-Mar toy piano, Schneider creates playful, yet ingenious pop tunes. Schneider dedicates the album to his obvious heroes, Brian Wilson, John Lennon, and Syd Barrett, and borrows from their songwriting and production techniques without sounding imitative. And he saves the best for last, placing "Go Marilee" and "Grant Me the Day" as the final two tracks. - Mike Harbin

MARYS WINDOW - *Whore* (Slipdisc, 1111 N. Dearborn #3007, Chicago, IL 60610) Watered down goth rock, if you can even call it that. Unoriginal, uninspiring, unchallenging, pretentious flunky arty hardrock bullshit. And to top it all off, this was the very last CD played before my CD player went kapoot after all those years off service. Thanks a whole bunch jerks. Next time I'm in Chicago, I'm making sure to pack my silencer and extra clips. - Paul Barger

Photo by Jim Testa

MAXIMUM JACK - *Do Not Disturb* Start with the Byrds, jump to the Plimsouls, and the next stop is... Maximum Jack? Hard to believe, I know. They're young, from New Jersey, and the name is truly awful, but this unsigned quartet has forged an exquisite pop LP that literally explodes with chiming guitars, stinging leads, candy-coated harmonies, and quick-witted lyrics. Singer, songwriter, and guitarist Jeremy Scott reveals himself to be something of a genius, a triple threat whose canny songwriting, flavorful guitar, and engaging vocals invite comparisons to both classic rockers like Roger McGuinn and new-breed stylists like Paul Westerberg and Stephen Malkmus. "Mopping blood up off the floor, Got a brain? Well, what's it for?" he sings to his do-nothing contemporaries in the bitter anti-Generation X diatribe "Zoloff." Scott unleashes a razor-edged sense of humor in "The Ballad Of Twenty Dollars," the catchiest song you'll ever hear about someone trying to get a pal to repay a loan, and plays the naughty boy friend in "Behind The Tree." The adjectives don't stop: Breezy, sparkling, effervescent... A remarkable debut, one that you'll be sorry you missed. (Email: MaxmumJack@aol.com; web page at <http://www.webcom.com/maxjack/>) - Jim Testa

MEATMEN - *War of the Superbikes II* (Go Cart/Soapbox Records, PO Box 20 Prince Street Station, New York, NY 10012) The kings of politically incorrect spudcore are back for another round of abuse for you and me. It's amazing how many ways Tesco Vee can talk about genetalia (pickle parlor, wifey hole, etc.). Soon to be classic songs such as "ABBA, GOD and Me," "Blowjobs Ain't Cheatin'" and "Fast Food Fist Fuck." Pure cock-rock that makes me want to grab a hold and sing along! - Gary McGarvey

MEDESKI, MARTIN AND WOOD - *Shackman* (Grammavision) Take one percussionist and add one organist while stirring in a bass player and you get MM&W (cool recipe analogy huh). This album, at times, has a very Hip-Hop influenced Jazz appeal. Other tracks remind me of the legendary Booker T. and the MGs. This is a great album to relax you after an all-day hardcore show. - Gary Mc.

MEN OF LEISURE - *Creme Soda* (Men of Leisure, PO Box 2066 Edison, NJ 08818-2066) Considering how far too many people sulk nowadays in a perpetual deep-seated funk, it's refreshing to run across some folks who

eclectic style. The CD opens with a song about the world owing a guy a living, in which singer-songwriter-performance artist-poet-author Morris sounds just like Mark Knopfler of Dire Straits. There are also a couple of folk tunes and a sort of gospel number but most of this can be easily slid into the New Age Country category. A good release which I enjoyed and will play again, but I'm not sure it will be of much interest to most Jersey Beat readers. - Rodney Leighton

MORTAL REMAINS - No Cash Flow (Tender Stone Entertainment, 2472 Broadway Suite 375, New York, NY 10025) Mortal Remains play heavy guitar-dominated metal that makes some attempt at tempo changes. However, in the end, it usually sounds boring. The band is not heavy enough to impress you with power, nor musically interesting enough to hold your attention, and tries too hard to sound unique. The biggest flaw lies in the fact that they attempt to cram too many ideas into one song, which inevitably sounds choppy and disjointed. They also rely too heavily on vocal effects and other metal clichés early in the disc. If the band can clean up its sound and stop trying to become a Rush for the 90's, they will be much better off. - Rich Quinlan

MOTHER FUCKER 666 (Get Hip! Recordings, PO Box 666, Canonsburg, PA 15317) Debut foot-longer from punk "supergroup" featuring Allan Clark and Keith Telligman from The Lazy Cowgirls, Mike Metoff from the legendary Pagans and that punk rock teen idol himself, Jeff Dahl. This thing is prime scorch and it has it in spades, jack. Punk rock the way it was intended to be played - no ska, no metal, just meat and potatoes rock and roll with a heapin' helpin' of snot and bile. And as an added bonus, you get a guest vocal appearance by the sexier-than-sexy Zebra doing that old girl group classic "Then He Kissed Me" (What can I say, I LOVE a bad girl). With all of this going for it, how can you say no? - David Brock

THE MUFFS - *Happy Birthday to Me* (Reprise) The Muffs are a band that continues to improve with each record, and *Happy Birthday to Me* displays their rootsy, gitty sound, full of attitude and swagger. While this latest release is not quite as raw as earlier works, the Muffs have put together a collection of pure rock n' roll with crunching backbeats and Kim Shattuck's ripping guitar work. Shattuck's voice is still the main attraction here. Her moods can range from passionate on tracks like "Honeymoon" and "All Blue Baby" to ragged street fight toughness on "Pennywhore", "Nothing" and "Keep Holding Me". The Muffs are part Pistols and part Beatles; a band able to borrow from rock's early years and combine it with punk fury. There is not one weak song here among the fifteen offerings and you will have this one on repeat for a while. - Rich Q.

MUSE - *Arcana* (Atlantic Records) Muse has a Smashing Pumpkins like sound complete with a whiny voice and emotional/powerful guitar rock. - Eva Silverman

MUSTARD PLUG - *Evildoers Beware!* (Hopeless, Box 7495, Van Nuys CA 91409) In my opinion, these guys are one of the best ska bands around. Uptempo and fun. Worth three hours of your minimum wage! - Gary Mc.

I'm not a big ska guy. My tolerance extends to about four songs per sitting...so I broke this CD up into three sittings and found each one to be okay. I guess I'm of the opinion that Mustard Plug sounds the best when they decide to stay away from the clean guitar sound/all upstroke thing. It's then that they start to sound like every other ska CD that I sit through. When they click on the distortion box, well, they make a racket, yeah, and start to sound a little bit more distinctive than the ska bands who stick to the seemingly preset clean/upstroke formula that makes my tolerance for this stuff so low in the first place. Oh yeah, almost forgot to mention these guys have got some good horns going on. - Mike Fournier

MY OWN VICTIM - *No Voice, No Rights, No Freedom* (Century Media) Very reminiscent of 1980's New York Hardcore, complete with the ever appreciated breakdowns (HC kids will know what I'm speakin'). They got stuff on their minds & they're gonna say it. These guys are cool! - Gary Mc.

MY PSYCHOTIC MOTOR - "The You EP" (Suburban Dance Music, PO Box 47, West Creek NJ 08092) I'm not quite sure which direction this is heading. The way the CD is written up, this is meant to be dance music (the kind you find at bars at the Jersey shore.) But it reminds me more of early style Industrial. Either way, it's cool with me. - Gary McC.

NAPALM DEATH - *Inside The Torn Apart* (Earache) Man, just when you thought they try at a comeback was done, Napalm Death come right back in your face with more sheer brutality and angst. Songs like "Breed To Breathe," "Birth In Regress," and "Low Point" clearly show that Napalm Death can't be repressed. They just keep pounding out extreme music at a time when pussy alternative bands seem to have taken over. - Phil P.

NEEDULHED - *EP* (Gamma Ray, 853 Broadway, Suite 1516, New York NY 10003) Mortimer, Weeks, and Snip may sound like distant cousins of the Addams Family, but in fact they are Needulhed, a gothic/industrial trio who perform in Halloween makeup. Think of them as New Jersey's answer to Marilyn Manson. The lyrics on this six-song EP traffic in such ghoulish topics as skeletons, nightmares, and hemorrhages (which the CD sleeve manages to misspell,) with annoying, distorted vocals and clunky synthesized drum beats. A few of the synth riffs suggest the foundation of a decent song, but Needulhed seems more concerned with scaring small children with their corny, calculated offensiveness than in creating memorable music. - Jim Testa

NEPENTHE - *Everything Was Beautiful And Nothing Hurt* (InEar Visions/ Sights & Sounds, 1050 Rte 35 #246, Shrewsbury NJ 07702) Definitely not my style of metal, but if you're into really long songs and vocals that drag along with new age/rock guitars, then pick this one up. That's what I'd call this, a mix between hard rock and new age. - Phil P.

NEWLYDEADS (Mutiny, Box B, NYC 10159) Have you ever wondered to what happened to some of those laughable Eighties hairmetal bands? Well, I'll tell you anyway. Some OD'd, some never knew when to quit, and some reinvented themselves with some help from the underground. I'll explain. Taimé Downe (Faster Pussycat) and Kyle Kyle (Bang Tango) are the Newlydeads. After a stint with Pigface, Taimé borrowed from some of the greats of industrial music (Ministry, NIN, KMFDM, and Pigface) to create his own kinda progressive industrial album. Even though I laugh out loud at his roots, I must say this is worth a try. - Gary Mc.

NEW YORK SKA-JAZZ ENSEMBLE (Moon Ska) Blend of traditional ska and freeform jazz. Great to listen to until the occasional vocal kicks in. I like 'em instrumental. - Gary Mc.

NINE DAZE WONDER - *The Release* (278 North Ave, Wood Ridge NJ 07075) I couldn't help but notice all the stickers with this band's logo around my hometown, so I went to check these neighbors out. This young band (some members are still in high school) show a range and skill level beyond their age, playing hard rock complete with harmonies and melodies. Rob Kakascik's vocals are full of power and emotion, as exemplified by the powerful chorus of "Life:" "My first love didn't matter to me." Hmm, maybe not, but I bet you both remember each other. The band's name translates to "something that creates a short-lived sensation," which would be a real shame in this case, since there's real potential here. - Tom B.

NINEFINGERED (Too Damn Hype Records/Chord Recordings, PO Box 1520 Cooper Station New York, NY 10276) This band, while never officially breaking up, only made music as a unit for about three years in the early 90's. Two of the members went on to other bands - Mike Dean joined Corrosion of Conformity and Rich Hoak is with Brutal Truth. This crudely recorded disc is a compilation of the band's early singles and other odd tracks. Ninefingered created sometimes trippy, sometimes thrilling, but always loud music. The album opens with "Incendiary", a head-space track with a killer groove that sounds like it came from the first Black Sabbath sessions - doom stricken, pounding and haunting. There is even a version of Motley Crue's "Dr. Feelgood," proving that they have a sense of humor. This is one that you should listen to a few times in a row in order to appreciate what these guys were all about. If you missed them the first time, like I did, this is cool disc to pick up. - Rich Quinlan

NO MOTIV - *Cynical* (The Edge Recordz, PO Box 7111, Oxnard CA 93031) Emotional, personal punk energy comprises this raw release from No Motiv. The band sticks to straight ahead, no frills style punk, allowing the honesty of their music to be the backbone of the songs. The tunes here feature accounts of relationships, music and the outside world, best described in songs like "Friends", "Believe", "Tomorrow" and "Neverending Cloudy Day". My favorite cut is "924", a scathing look at the Gilman Street punk scene and the less than favorable reaction the band received when they attempted to play there ("Four songs into our set/One or two claps is all we get"). Gloomy without brooding and emotional without whining, No Motiv have put together a great disc and a bright future. - Rich Q.

Here's a pleasant surprise from top to bottom. Looks like these Oxnard, CA punks have done a very good job of bridging the large gap between GAMEFACE and INSTED. There's some great pop melodies layered on the crunchy, 90's guitar driven hardcore attack. Many songs are about teen identity crisis and growing up, as well as girl problems and motivation (or lack of). A good melodic hardcore record that you can sink your teeth into. - John Lisa

NUMBER ONE CUP - *Wrecked By Lions* (Flydaddy, P.O. Box 545, Newport, RI 02840). Pretty cool distorted indie pop. Weezer-like melodicism crossed with a Pavement/Heavy Vegetable/Pee quirkiness. Some Papas Fritas as well. Good stuff. - Jon Clark

OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE DISORDER - *Hoard, Wash, Pray, Repeat* (Catalyst Entertainment, 36-03 Corporal Kennedy St., Bayside, NY 11361) If metal is truly making a comeback, bands like OCD should be a big part of it. While the band's sound is not revolutionary, revolving around a heavy guitar crunch with growled vocals and well timed bursts of speed, they are able to write memorable hooks. Tracks like "Never Again" and "Taught Well" bound out of your speakers and bounce off of your walls. The disc also features a total overhaul and beefed up version of one of Alice Cooper's more bizarre tracks, "I Love the Dead", and two live songs which display a tight sense of power. Metal's biggest problem has always been predictability, but OCD will surprise you, most noticeably on "I've", which has an almost boogie-like guitar riff. This is an impressive start for this band. - Rich Quinlan

ONE KING DOWN - *Bloodlust Revenge* (Equal Vision Records, PO Box 14, Hudson, NY 12534) Preachy, metallic straight-edge "hardcore" in the modern vein. Very heavy and very intense. with lyrics about drugs, animal rights, rape, etc. In other words, pretty generic, modern straight-edge HC. - Paul Silver



POSTER CHILDREN

Photo by Jim Testa

ORAL GROOVE - *Collisionville* (Cross Records, 31 East Ridgewood Ave., Ridgewood NJ 07450) Sounds as if Oral Groove grew up listening to Elvis Costello and Joe Jackson. All of the 14 songs are decent, although the vocals on some are sung at a high pitch that annoyed the crap out of me. The first cut titled "Car Driver" makes keeping the cd worth it and "England's Dreaming" was also better than average - Den S.

ORCHIS - *A Thousand Winters* (World Serpent Distribution, Unit 717, Seager Buildings, Brookmill Road, London SE8 4HL, United Kingdom) Ethereal Celtic music with lyrics adapted from medieval poems, witches spells and the like. Beautiful harmonies and otherworldly arrangements yield a calming effect. The instruments are recorded in a way that sounds a little buzzy, noisy, and lo-fi, which adds to the effect. - Paul Silver

ORAL GROOVE - *Collisionville* (Cross, 31 E Ridgewood Ave, Ridgewood NJ 07450) It's usually not a good sign when a mainstream pop band hasn't been signed to either a major or important indie label by the time they release their third album. Such is the case with this NY band. This sounds pretty mid-70's to me, with some variety of influences and guitar sounds, but mostly this is too mellow for ears used to punk rock. The most dominant influence is a bit of Neil Young-type semi-country hard rock, and two songs, "Car Driver" and "Hold It In," stand out as being radio friendly. But the rest is pretty much mediocre and forgettable. - Rick Spithoff

ORGANUM - *Kammer* (Aeroplane, PO Box 120004, San Antonio, TX 78212) Creative ambient noise. This CD is somewhat of a departure for

Jackman, the force behind Organum, in that the release has lots of very quiet sections with altered everyday sounds, like dripping water and the like. It sounds similar to some of the stuff Jim O'Rourke has been doing, and, in fact, O'Rourke has collaborated with David Jackman on some Organum projects in the past. Maybe some of his style rubbed off. Anyway, the single 17 1/2 minute track is a nice, interesting piece to listen to. - Paul Silver

OS 101 (Resurrection A.D. Records, PO Box 763, Red Bank NJ 07701) Crawling out of the remains of Hogan's Heroes comes OS 101 (Old School 101). This debut disc features six uptempo, somewhat bouncy and very positive tracks. All of the songs motor along with smooth riffs and high energy. Some material here really works well and some sputters, but the standouts are "Different Sight", "Settle the Score" and the finale, "Before Regret". While I was not entirely blown away, this does include great melodic hardcore that certainly will not disappoint any fans who miss Hogan's Heroes. - Rich Quinlan

OUTRAGEOUS CHERRY - *Nothing's Gonna Cheer You Up* (Third Gear Records, P.O. Box 1886 Royal Oak, MI 48068) Detroit rock has a legendary, long-standing reputation for being every bit as tough, guffy, and greasy as the cars produced in mass quantities there. This engagingly mellow and rough-edged quartet offers an extremely spare, subdued, meditative alternative to that whole rough'n'tumble Motor City bit. Matthew Smith's ragged, reedy voice, ably supported by neatly concise songwriting, sparse, unadorned, no-frills, often quite raw and unpolished arrangements, surefooted playing, a slow, easygoing, takin'-its-own-sweet-time sound, and a wistful, relaxed air of melancholy reflection, proves genuinely haunting as its unleashed on a series of catchy, low-key, gently affecting songs that are all the more moving because they're presented with a great deal of restraint and thoughtfulness. Although often sad and depressing, there's a rueful, resigned quality evident here which slowly, but surely grows on the listener -- and will linger in your head long after the disc is over. - Joe Wawrzyniak

OXBOW - *Serenade in Red* (SST Records, PO Box 1, Lawn-dale, CA 90260) Steve Albini's production is evident on this release, with its prominent bass and clean, present snare drum sound. The vocals are really twisted, sounding sort of like a cross between Ozzie Osbourne after a real bender and someone with Tourette's Syndrome. The music is not quite as hard as Sabbath, though, sounding sort of like semi-heavy psyche-rock, with sliding bar chords on the guitars and all. If it weren't for the annoying, screechy vocals, this would be a really cool, interesting release. The instrumentals are diverse and engaging, and the production is top-notch. Too bad the vocals can get so damn annoying. - Paul Silver

PENNYWISE - *Full Circle* (Epitaph) Pennywise follows a very simple formula of speedy guitar, speedier drums and clear vocals to create some pretty stirring punk. While this record has a tendency to sound like a Bad Religion tribute album, their sound stays remarkably tight over the course of 60-plus minutes worth of music, and there are no filler tracks here. While very harmonic, Pennywise relies more on the punk than pop here and should surprise some people with fierce power of the material; from the first track, the emotion is impressive and inspiring. The album ends with "Bro Hymn Tribute", an emotional tribute to deceased bassist Jason Thirst. Very impressive, and worth having. - Rich Quinlan

PERfect ThYroID - *Musical Bamacles* (Shanachie) What can I say!?! P.T. are one of those Ska bands that do some funny songs and other stuff that annoys me. They do cover Joe Jackson's "Got the Time" with a new zeal. I would still check them out. - Gary Mc.

PERMA FROST - *In Harm's Way* (Emperor Norton Records, 8033 Sunset Blvd #23, Los Angeles, Ca 90046) One of the most schizophrenic bands I've ever heard. Lead vocals are shared by Ad Frank (a male) and Linda Bean (a female, also the bass player). When Ms. Bean takes control, the band is full of high energy and sounds great. Her songs remind me of Mary's Danish. When Mr. Frank takes over, boring! He turns the band into a slower European, Oasis sounding, yawning contest. Thankfully, Ms. Bean leads a majority of the time. "Johnny Marr" and "Take The Floor" are two great songs. (Note: This group used to be known as Miles Dethmuffin.) - Den S.

PIPE - *Slowboy* (Merge) Fantastic, snotty garage rock 'n' roll. Hard, fast, but not too heavy. Not slick at all, but not too raw, not too punk. No trendy genres, no mathrock. Just rock 'n' roll music. Like the band every kid dreams of starting in high school (or at least used to). Included are very cool covers of Elvis Costello's "No Action" and the Subsonics' "I Love You,

I Kill You." - Paul Silver

PLANET OF THE MUTE ANTS - *James Plays DressUp* (Mutant Pop Records, 5010 NW Shasta, Corvallis OR 97330) Fun group of boyz who seem to know how to make fun punk music. It's beat tappin, head boppin and fun for all. - Eva Silverman

POKER FACE - *Next!* (PhD Music, PO Box 127, Center Valley PA 18034) Poker Face is singer-songwriter-keyboardist Paul Topete, with musical assistance from friends on guitar, bass, and drums. The music is bright, trebly pop-rock with ringing acoustic guitars, full-bodied orchestrations, and earnest, adult lyrics about relationships. It's well done if very mainstream; Bryan Adams fans would probably dig it. - Jim Testa

POLARA - *C'est la Vie* (Interscope) This cd is made up of vocals, guitars, synth, samples, loops programming, drums, organs, beeps, and something called arpeggiation. If you're into that stuff you will love this disc. If not, like myself, you will pray for a drive by shooting while it's playing. - Den S.

POLLEN - *Peach Tree* (Wind Up, 72 Madison Ave. 8th Floor, NYC 10016)

Punk music for the *Party Of Five* crowd - too corporate-sounding to please the punkers yet still too rough around the edges for the college crowd. The end result is a pretty dispensable album. - Michael Chant

POND - *Rock Collection* (The Work Group/Sony) Pond is another decent band that just does not have what it takes to stand out in an overcrowded music world. They are certainly talented musicians, raising themselves far above three chord stupidity. However, they do not possess the technical brilliance that will leave you remembering this record once you have finished listening to it. Pond clearly attempts to experiment on this album, particularly on songs like "My Dog is an Astronaut, Though," "Rebury Me," and the very unique-sounding "Ugly," the track that closes the disc. However, while they attempt to alter the dynamics and tone nearly song to song, all of this experimentation leaves you longing for a tangible sound. There is solid bass playing and lyrics that need to be listened to carefully, although vocally, the three vocalists all limit the singing to almost monotone. I had a difficult time getting into this record; while its moodiness was at times commendable, overall I felt tired after listening, not inspired. - Rich Quinlan

POOLE - *The Late Engagement* (SpinArt/Poole, PO Box 6952, Falls Church, VA 22046; email mrpoole@aol.com) Poole's second outing is my first real taste of their sunny 70's AM pop tunes and let me tell you, it makes me want to run out and get their first CD *Alaska Days*. This stuff is great. Pop that deals with everyday relationships and scenarios that puts a smile on your face. If you dig Teenage Fanclub, The Pooh Sticks, or Velvet Crush - bands with jangly guitars, great harmonies, and lyrics with a lot of heart - than you'll love *The Late Engagement*, by the pop maestros in Poole. - Rick K.

POSITIVE STATE - *The Bullshit Initiative* (Torque Records, P O Box 229, Arlington VA 22210) Positive State does a better job describing their music than anyone else possibly could. They call it "Spazz-core" and they could not be more accurate. This twelve song effort will leave your speakers blistered and raw. Positive State blast out speedier than speedy hardcore with ferocious vocals and numbing rhythms. The intensity of this disc should be marveled at, for the band is musically destructive but not sloppy. They have control over their seemingly reckless explosions. Tracks like "We'll March with Open Arms", "I Believe", "Here's my Receipt" and the title track will make you wonder how vocalist Steve has any vocal chords left. His heartfelt screaming tears through the music and only emphasizes the seriousness of their delivery, well, serious until the hilarious finale, "Pass the California". This is hardcore for the late 90's. The guys keep their hardcore roots on their sleeves but also add more creativity into the mix. Very worthwhile. - Rich Quinlan

POSTER CHILDREN - *RFTM* (Reprise) *RFTM* finds the P-Kids in fine form, with some of their catchiest and most head-bobbing, guitar-driven pop songs yet ("O For 1," "Music For America.") Even better, this CD is also a



PULLER

Photo by Jim Testa

CD-ROM, programmed by the band's multi-talented bassist, Rose Marshack. Pop it into your Mac or PC and you can enjoy hours of interactive entertainment with the Poster Kids, reliving their tours through Rose's illustrated tour diaries, visiting their recording studio and bedrooms (with amazing Macromedia effects that let you pan around an entire room in 3-D.) or check out the schematics of the band's tour van, rendered in a hilarious spoof of those Star Trek CD ROM's that let you explore the inner workings of the USS Enterprise. - Jim T.

POWERHOUSE - *No Regrets* (Blackout) Fast, furious hardcore that spans influences from '88 (Youth of Today, Side By Side) to '97 (Redemption 87, Floorpunch.) Hints of NYHC creep in there too. I'm really mad now that I missed them when they played NYC. - Rich Hall

POWERMAN 5000 - *Mega!! Kung Fu Radio* (Dreamworks) As skillfully executed as this whole funk metal thing can be, it always winds up sounding tired and derivative to me. The kids love it, though. - Mike Fournier

PRODIGY - *Spontaneous Human Combustion* (21st Century) Bootlegs are a funny thing. They can be like F. Gump's chocolate box... you never know what kind of wacky shit you'll find! This particular bootleg is DJ remixes, some stuff you can buy in cooler record stores, other stuff isn't officially released anywhere (which is why boots are cool). S.H.C. goes back to 1992 with "Out of Space" and "Fire" as well as the entire "Firestarter" EP mixed in. It's good if you like Prodigy already or just getting into them. - Gary Mc.

PROP 13 - *Change Is Good* (Theologian, P.O. Box 1070, Hermosa Beach, CA 90254). Fast, somewhat angry punk rock from California. Reminded me of Good Riddance or Straight Ahead. - Jon Clark

PRUNELLA SCALES - *Dressing Up The Idiot* (Mutiny) A mix of Dolls/Stooges attitude and Stone Temple Pilots-styled thudrock. More thud than fizz, though. - Jim Testa

PUGS - *"Pugs Bite the Red Knee"* (Casual Tonalities 1250 North Highland Avenue Hollywood, CA 90038) They are the Japanese version of Mr. Bungle. I suppose for a Japanese punk band they're good. They are interesting to listen to, very tight, and a lot of music....it's too bad I can't understand a word of it. - Stacey H.

PULLER - *Sugarless* (Tooth and Nail) I played this CD several times, but it's the darndest thing...I can't remember it. Maybe because it's lackluster without a catchy song. Features former members of For Love Not Lisa. - Gary Mc.

PULSARS - *Pulsars* (Alm Sounds, P.O. Box 148544, Chicago IL 60614) Those who are quick to proclaim the superiority and artistic integrity of the current crop of D.I.Y. punk favorites would do well to remember that history

is, indeed, cyclic. Just as the first era of punk wunderkinds like the Clash and Sex Pistols begat the soulless technophilia of new wave, so too might the recent successes of the genre sire a generation of cyber-oriented artistry. Case in point: Pulsars. The work of brothers David and Harry Trumfio, Pulsars sound like nothing so much as a cross between, say, Algebra Suicide and Human League. A collection of high-tech pop tunes complete with wistful vocals, programmed instruments and random sampling, *Pulsars* is wonderfully ornate, strangely alluring and ultimately empty. In the end, there's no "middle" to the music. If you enjoy this sort of structured rock-musician-as-cyborg, then definitely check out Pulsars. I'll stick to more "organic" musical thrills, myself. - ReverendK

PURE PLASTIC TREE - *The Action People vs. George the King of Swing* (Big Beef Records, PO Box 301 WBB, Dayton OH 45409) The musical love child of Pearl Jam and the Dave Matthews Band. Depending on your tastes, this can be a good or bad thing. - Gary Mc.

Q SOUTH (Times Square/Silva Screen, 1600 Broadway #910, New York NY 10019) Jammy AOR rock with a mild Latin flavor. Santana fans might dig it. - Jim T.

RAYBEATS - *GuitarCombo* (Bar None Records, PO Box 1704, Hoboken NJ 07030) "Instrumental Rock and Roll" from the Early Eighties, being reissued on CD for the first time. Pretty neat funky beats with a sax and surf guitar riffs. Fun. - Eva S.

REAL LULU - *"We Love Nick"* (Big Beef Records, PO Box 303 WBD, Dayton, OH 45409) Candy coated girl rock. It's marginal even if you like that stuff. Ex-Pixie and Breeder member Kim Deal produced one of the songs, leading me to believe that this might be a worthwhile tolerable release. I was wrong. - Stacey H.

[refused] - *everlasting* (Equal Vision Records POB 14, Hudson NY 12534) Open-E chugga chugga NYC-sounding hardcore. I've heard this stuff a million times before, yeah, and so have you, but never with a rad Swedish singer who occasionally sounds like Ozzy. That's not a slag at all, mind you. This record is solid lyrically (the distortions that governmental perspective lends to history) and tight, musically (effortless tempo changes at unexpected times.....not the standard "breakdown" shit you've come to set yr watch to at shows). I guess I was pleasantly surprised by this one, and I expect that "Pretty Face" will show up on more than a few of my mix tapes. Bravo. - Mike Fournier

THE REGRETS - *New Directions: Results Beat Boasts* (Crank) The first track, "Usara Usara," is sloppy but great. The bass is really cool and loose, sorta like Firehose or Mike Mills from REM. The music seems contrived and too telling lyrically, or maybe it's just that the production is so clear and I'm not used to that from indie bands these days. I like the title printed on the CD itself: "Nude Directions." I don't know why some bands edit themselves unless there is some big executive telling them what to do (and I doubt that's the case at Crank.) By the way, the compilation CD *Don't Forget To Breathe* that I got from Crank Records was great all the way through. In all, this one is a winner too. - Dave Urbano

REVERSING HOUR - *The Diva's Whiskey* (190-B Carroll St. Atlanta GA 30312) Although these songs vary in mood and tempo (and occasionally sound like they're being sung by that Gin Blossoms guy), the feeling that I get can be summed up in two words: Eighties soundtrack. I'm inevitably reminded of a slightly off-center teen named Cameron or Lance walking through an airport, weight of the world on his shoulders. You know... the camera pans up now, any one of these songs playing, depending on the mood that is shown in Cameron/Lance's careworn face when the pan is completed and the voiceover begins. - Mike Fournier

RHYTHM COLLISION - *Collision Course* (Dr Strange, PO Box 7000-117, Alta Loma CA 91701) Back in Punk 101, not only did I learn how to stick 6-inch safety pins in my face and to lace up my Doc Martens properly, but also that Rhythm Collision = Consistently High Quality Punk Rock. This 53-minute collection of B side and other rare tracks dating back to 1989 proves once again that widely accepted theory to be correct. RC writes catchy tunes as well as any good punk band, and plays most of their songs with sufficient speed and snotty attitude to escape the generic Pop Punk category. This compilation includes 19 blasts of pure bliss, showing how their sound has evolved over the years. It includes some of their best, such as "Holiday," "Faraway," and "Awake." Lyrically, Rhythm Collision continues to impress me as well. Whether they're making fun of something or dealing with more serious issues, they conscientiously avoid the standard punk cliches. They also tend to be positive, but usually in a subtle way rather than that annoyingly preachy in-your-face style too many bands use. I would have to rank this release among my three favorite records so far this year. This should be the last release with their old lineup as two members

of Everready recently joined the band on bass and drums. - Rick Spithoff

THE RIVIERA PLAYBOYS - *Greatest Hits* (Jargon Records, 1237 East Main Street Rochester, New York 14609-6941) Hands down the best 9160s music cover band this side of Untamed Youth. Whether they're tear-assin' their way through the almighty Link Wray's "Branded" or ferociously bulldozing over the Dirty Wurds' immortal "Why," this primordial Rochester, New York threesome gives 15 of garage rock's most rude, rowdy, raunchy, and ridiculous numbers an appropriately sweaty, rugged, rough-around-the-edges full-speed-ahead sonic workout. A steamin', smokin', smolderin' slab of tough'n'tasty Grade A trash rock meat, with enough gristle to gnaw on for weeks on end. - Joe Wawrzyniak

ROLLINS BAND - *Come In and Burn* (Dreamworks) Writer, actor, publisher, part-time MTV VJ and all around media darling Henry Rollins returns with a new record full of honest and powerful songs. Every time I listen to Rollins, I have to convince myself that his "Damaged" days are long gone, so I will not be as disappointed. However, with all that said, *Come In and Burn* is a great loud record for the late 90's, extremely well written and



HENRY ROLLINS

produced. The 36 year old Rollins continues to raise the bar on his songwriting ability. While his uncontrolled thrashing days are behind him, he continues to create stirring power-packed songs that are as chiseled as his biceps. While there are similarities to recent Rollins Band material, the songs here are smoother and more melodic than *Weight*. Well crafted tempo changes and typically introspective, self-critical yet affirmative lyrics dominate. The one weakness is that the album comes out of the gate a little slowly. The first two tracks, "Shame" and "Starve," are solid songs, but it sounds like Rollins and his band are holding back. However, with time, the disc produces some of Rollins' finest solo material, such as "Spilling Over the Side," "Say Goodbye Again" (which deals with the funeral of a friend,) and the closing track, "Rejection". Each of these songs are heavy yet relentlessly harmonic and catchy. As the airways continue to become clogged with mindless garbage, Rollins is a voice that can cut through the nonsense and deliver solid, emotional music. - Rich Quinlan

ROYAL CROWN REVUE - *Mugsy's Move* (Warner Bros.) This brings a new angle to retroactive music. RCR will return you to the days of crooners like Sinatra and Big-Band Swing music. You know, the stuff your grandparents used to like: horns, Hammond organs and musicianship. Good old fashioned 1930's, fling your girl in the air tunes. Also, if you like a band called SQUIRREL NUT ZIPPERS, then you'll love RCR! - Gary McGarvey

RUBY FALLS - *Heroines* (Silver Girl Records, PO Box 161024, San Diego, CA 92176) A disc chock full of anomalies. Some of the songs are really smooth, beautiful indie pop. Some are intense, raw garage rock 'n' roll. And some songs go back and forth between these extremes. It's hard to imagine that such diverse sounds can come from the same band, but Ruby Falls pulls it off quite successfully. A good listen. - Paul Silver

THE RUSTY NAILS (Coolidge Records 157 Coolidge Terrace Wyckoff NJ 07841) How can I not like something that comes from my cute-sleepy hometown of Wyckoff, NJ? What Brett Boyle, the brains behind the Rusty Nails calls "the greatest place on Earth...where the crickets are louder than anything else." Well, maybe not, but the Rusty Nails are a completely unique 4-some, mixing bagpipes, amazing rock and experimental to create a wonderful hybrid of wild sounds. - Eva Silverman

RYE COALITION - *Hee Saw Duh Kaet* (Gern Blandsten Records, PO Box 356, River Edge, NJ 07661) Very noisy, undisciplined sounding guitar solo from these young Jersey boys. Jon Gonnelli's guitar cuts through each track while Ralph Cuseglio's vocals cut through your brain. The band has a raw, likeable edge to them as they bash and smash their way through nine efforts. They do not have the musical skill quite yet to create a truly memorable hook, but a tracks like "300 Foxes" and "We Ride" are a good start. This is abrasive punk rock with nothing but a ton of energy as its lifeblood. The album closes with "Iron Fist in Velvet Glove" which does have the most harmony of all the tracks here and is great way to leave you off. This is not great by conventional standards, but if you like your punk raw, fun and loud, take an interest in the Rye Coalition. - Rich Q.

SABOT - *Somehow, I Don't Think So ... Vice Versa* (Broken Rekids, PO Box 460402 San Francisco, CA 94146-0402) A sloppy, rambling, cut-to-the-bone, jammin'-in-the-garage-on-a-lazy-afternoon minimalist trashy'n'thrashy rock musical style is never an easy thing to pull off, primarily because the whole thing is either clinched or defeated by the level of energy and dexterity evident in its execution. Alas, this strictly second-rate instrumental twosome -- bassist Chris Rankin and drummer Hilary Binder -- just ain't up to snuff, displaying a most unfortunate tendency to crank out the same god-damn tune twelve times sans any variation, vitality, or melodic complexity. Redundant, plodding, and boringly drawn out, this album merely lurches from one repetitious, too similar cut to another without picking up any momentum or deviating from a quickly tiring slow tempo, medium beat, painfully trudging rhythm, more-rigid-than-the-Ten-Commandments groove. Extremely rough going. - Joe W.

SAMAEAL - *Passage* (Century Media) Exceptional Black Metal. Very moody and intricate. A must for aficionados of this stuff. - Gary Mc.

SANITY ASSASSINS - *Resistance Is Useless* (Retch, 49 Rose Crescent, Woodvale, Southport, Meyerside, England PR8 3RZ) 30-year old guys playing high-energy punk. 17 songs filled with speed and the old "Punk Spirit." "Ligature" and "TV21" are amongst the best songs. Very good, definitely look for it if you're into good old Punk Rock. - Phil P.

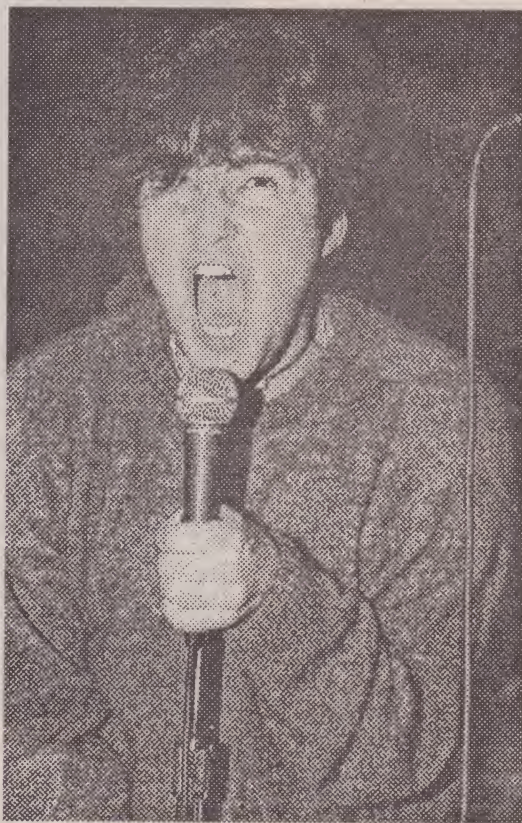
SCREW RADIO - *I'm A Generation X* (SST) "Oh god...please...no...please tell me Black Flag fuckin' ruled...god...no...please...AAUUGGHH!!" Pitiful, isn't it? This is what I wake up screaming for two weeks after listening to ANY of these post-Black Flag recordings, including that sweaty Rollins character. But this Greg Ginn fellow takes the proverbial cake! Even those "intense" Black Flag instrumentals ("Process Of Weeding Out" anyone?) were pretentious at best, but there's no stoppin' him now! No annoying

voices saying things like "No, Greg, one solo per song is enough." This entire album is a Black Flag solo - faster, slower, stop, go, get down (you know the drill) - but they are unmercifully longer. Take a nickel's worth of free advice - put on *Damaged* and forget any of this ever happened. - David Brock

SCUD MOUNTAIN BOYS - *The Early Year* (SubPop) A Re-release of the Scuds first two LP's for Chunk Records. Though lumped into the alt-country movement, (I despise the nomenclature, but it's a hell of a lot better than "Americana"...Who the hell comes up with these things?) the Scudders tend to be more dreamy and ethereal, taking traditional sounds (mandolin, steel guitar) and melding them with the narcoleptic pop sensibilities of a Galaxie 500, with a touch of Gram Parsons and early Eagles thrown in for good measure. Though the dreamy melodies are likely to draw you in, what you'll find once you're there is more akin to despair. The placid surface hides lyrics that are more often than not, dark and very bleak. But that does nothing to lessen their appeal. These are poignant, well-crafted songs that are intense in their simplicity and subtlety yet bring a

certain beauty and hope with their darkness. A gorgeous record for the beautiful loser. - David Brock

SEA MONKEYS - *Sea Monkeys vs. Bigfoot* (V.M.L., PO Box 183, Franklin Park IL 60131) The one and only Sea Monkeys return with their brand of slick punk-pop. This is another example of a band with a priceless sense of humor and the ability to not take themselves too seriously. I am not certain if this stuff would grow tired after a while, I am assuming it would, but it will definitely make you laugh a few times. Tracks like "Bigfoot", "Life of the Parking Lot" and "Beatnik Chick and Hotrod Guy" are pure comedy set to high tempo playing. My personal favorite has got to be their ode to Nipsy Russell, "I'm Down with the Nipster". This is not technically superb by any stretch, but it has a quality about it that borrows from 50's innocence and 60's garage bands that makes this fun to listen to. It is refreshing to hear music played for fun sometimes. - Rich Quinlan



RYE COALITION Photo by Shawn Scallen

SEETHING GREY - *Louwer Error* (Sinclair Recording Company, 216 Felton Avenue, Highland Park, NJ 08904-2216) My impression of this disc is that Seething Grey seems bent on proving how talented they are. The record begins with a brief fun-loving jazz piece before melding into a fairly rocking track called "Hockerburger". Unfortunately, while the band provides the listener with 15 guitar fueled efforts, none of them really stand out. The band has a

ready made mainstream sound, yet far too often Seething Grey uses standard alterna-rock cliches as their musical backbone. The musicianship here is solid, but far too predictable, and their songs lack a real luster. Even when the band kicks into high gear on cuts like "Nothing's Feelings", something is missing. You will recognize Seething Grey's sound and know that you have heard this all before. - Rich Q.

SEVEN STOREY MOUNTAIN - *Leper Ethics* (Art Monk Construction PO Box 6332 Falls Church, Va. 22040) There are a lot of bands who play guitar driven rock. However, very few show any sense of diversity or willingness to experiment, and their sound is listless and boring. That is anything but the case on this unique release. Seven Storey Mountain reveal different levels of controlled fury, punk-like speed, and precise tempo changes all within one song. The songs here generally start quickly and end quickly. It is what occurs in the middle that is so captivating. Copious amounts of swirling guitar noise wraps itself around the songs, allowing the rest of the band to alternate between peace and anger. Intensely personal lyrics delivered with raw emotion help elevate this disc far beyond the many imitators out there. Seven Storey Mountain is a band expanding its punk rock base into new directions. - Rich Quinlan

SEVENDUST (TVT Records) This is surprisingly fresh-sounding metal from this multi-cultural Atlanta-based band. These guys have clearly mastered the heavy low end and chugging guitar riffs that define metal, but they also add a little funk, rap and atmosphere into the mix. The result is a unique sounding record that will keep you guessing about what they will try next. Each track focuses on being loud, yet is done in different ways. The disc begins with possibly the best song of the bunch, an honest look at race relations called "Black". While songs like "Terminator" and "Born to Die" seem a little dated, they are the only weak moments here. Otherwise the band reinvents itself to a degree on each track without losing their central focus of keeping things heavy. The most noticeable moments of originality come on "Too Close to Hate", the soft, funky intro to "Prayer" and the brief, almost ambient feel that begins "Face". The band's influences range from Black Sabbath to Pantera, yet Sevendust is able to take their inspirations and elevate them a step higher, and do so with a great sense of melody. Their choruses are catchy, their lyrics well conceived, and their grooves are both harmonious and pounding. Sevendust is a band that understands metal's past, but realizes that it can no longer live there. - Rich Quinlan

SHADES APART - *Seeing Things* (Revelation) The Jersey boys are back with their trade mark brand of melodic emo-rock. This time Shades recorded with the Descendents' Bill Stevenson and Stephan Egerton out in the Blasting Room, and it sounds great. If you haven't already picked this up, shame on you. - Rick K.

SHALLOW - *High Flyin' Kid Stuff* (Zero Hour) Lots of buzzy guitars and reverb, yielding morose Euro-style pop, in the vein of Spiritualized. Petite female vox is an interesting counterpoint to the instrumentals, kind of like a ray of sunshine coming through a break in the thick clouds of melancholy. Nice. - Paul Silver

SHINER - *Iula divinia* (Hitt! Recordings, PO Box 45613 Kansas City MO 64171) This Kansas City trio has a smooth but driving psychedelic system in some their songs that can almost lull you into a trance before sliding into a metal-music roller coast loop-the-loop. Vocalist-guitarist Allen Epley pens the lyrics that range from slice-of-life song-pictures and a ballad of the plight of a housewife, to jack-asses who steal your lover. One of the most involved offerings is "Third Gear Scratch," with "It's your ride to the slop, a gift from Hef, a spit-free flesh press, you're working too hard, you're pushing the lard." - Chuck Wharton

SHOOTYZ GROOVE - *Hipnosis* (Roadrunner) Feel-good hip-hop rock with a touch of blues and jazz. Sounds like a big blob of shit, huh? Well, not this time. This style of music is kind of like ska - upbeat songs about being happy and everything is great-type shit. It amazed me because it caught my ear and held my attention as soon as I put the disc on, and because I never thought I'd be into this kind of music. - Phil P.

SHOEGAZER - *Intoxicated Birthday Lies* (Todo O Nada, 6201 Sunset Blvd.#077, Hollywood CA 90028) Probably the most interesting disk I've gotten to review this month. No Rancid or NOFX rip offs, no sappy overproduced pop wimpiness, just crazy spastic punk and hardcore. California's Shoegazer are musically out to kick everyone's head in. They play their asses off on these 14 songs and take your mind for a quite a ride. Jazzy duel guitar interlay keeps me interested as they diversify their sound quite well on this nicely crafted package. I'd like to hear more! - John Lisa

SHOOTYZ GROOVE - *Hipnosis* (Roadrunner) Musically, SG plays a jazz groove style of hip hop that lets you sit there and listen to what they have on your mind. I like that they make "real" music and it's not some "clan" of sample and loop junkies. If you're into Fun Lovin' Criminals, by all means check out Shootyz Groove. - Gary Mc.

SILVERJET - *pull me up...drag me down* (Virgin) I hate bands that torture me like this. What starts out as a really great hard-edged power pop record degenerates into third-rate MTV alternative rock drivel. The two good songs on here are what makes this even more inexcusable. If the whole thing sucked, then I would know that these guys just plain bite, but they proved that they know how to write good songs and they choose to lower themselves to the lowest common denominator by rehashing Cheap Trick by way of Nirvana riffs for assholes who'll never know the difference. This could have been a great record, but instead it's just innocuous and boring. Forget it. - David Brock

SIT 'N' SPIN - *Pappy's Corn Squeezin'* (Planet Pimp, 1800 Market St. #45, San Francisco CA 94102) Sit 'N' Spin is an all-girl group whose love affair with hip 60's rockabilly shines. This record is absolutely amusing. The mood, the spirit, the sound - everything is worth the money. - Michael C.

SIZE 14 (Volcano, 71 W 23 St. NYC 10010) This L.A. pop-rock band seems to be part of a backlash against the noisier distorted-guitar sounds

of 90's alternative rock. Size 14 plays pop with a clean guitar sound that hearkens back to the 70's. They write fairly catchy tunes with fun lyrics, but play them without a lot of energy. While this is a solid record, the tunes are not quite special enough and the band hasn't developed a distinctive enough sound of their own to stand out from the gazillion other half-decent pop rock bands out there. They seem to be proud of the fact that Darryl Dragon of Captain & Tennille played moog synthesizer on several tracks. In keeping with the spirit of the 70's, maybe they can get the Bee Gees to sing backup on their next LP. - Rick Spithoff

SKANDALOUS ALL-STARS - *Hit Me* (Shanachie) Ska versions of songs by Kiss, Beck, White Zombie, Nirvana and others. Isn't this the same idea as MUZAK? Take once original songs and turn them into processed fodder using a safe, time tested formula. I find this completely offensive.-TMF.

SKANDALOUS ALL STARS - *I've Gotcha Covered* (Shanachie) Somewhere else in this magazine, someone disliked a Ska compilation of cover tunes; this one here is its redemption. Some immortal Ska groups cover immortal songs (many of which are found on their albums). Some of the cooler ones are Ruder Than You's "Paranoid" and PERfect ThYroid's "Sanford and Son". Come to think of it... this whole thing is good! Buy it or you are a big, stupid booger! - Gary Mc.

SKINNERBOX - *What You Can Do, What You Can't* (Moon Ska) The cover alone is worth the price (I'd tell you what it is, but you should get off your ass and find a copy.) In the musical sense, these guys play all types of ska, from traditional to jazzy to faster stuff. No song is too long or too short, and they have some funny lyrics. Buy this or I'll never call you "Pookie" again. - Gary Mc.

SKOOKUMCHUCK - *Good Spirit Waters* (Mow Down Music, PO Box 45503, Seattle WA 98145) Very cute pop. This first attempt by Skookumchuck is becoming a favorite of mine rather quickly. Amazingly cute and sweet. Shared girl/boy vocals. Check them out! - Eva Silverman

SKYPUP - *Insulated* (CLR, 1400 Aliceanna St., Baltimore MD 21231) The first five songs are pop rock. The sixth, "Admission," is a short instrumental that sounds like a completely different band. The only impressive thing about this disc is the drummer. He plays like he is strung out on caffeine and girl scout cookies while being held captive by his band mates. He runs amuck on "Admission." - Den S.

SLEATER-KINNEY - *Dig Me Out* (Kill Rock Stars) On the 3rd release from these adorable grrrls, who are suddenly becoming more and more popular, their sound has shifted. Of course there still is the same powerful Heavens2Betsy Corin Tucker voice, and the same Excuse17 wild guitar riffs of Carrie Brownstein, but this album feels a bit different. New addition Janet Weiss adds the shotgun drums to an amazing band. Corin's voice seems not as pushed out as other albums and instead mixed in with the music more. This has its ups and downs. Truth is, they are an awfully powerful band with an amazing sound that I love and will always be attached to. It holds true for this record too. - Eva Silverman

SLEESTACK - *The Power of Gemini-a* (Big Jesus Enterprises, PO Box 282152, Los Angeles, CA 90029) Lots of guitar noise (and I mean noise), some shouted and moaned vocals, and amateurish bass/drums (and keyboard, sometimes). Noise with no point. Ugly noise. Grating noise. - Paul Silver

ELLIOT SMITH - *either/or* (Kill Rock Stars 120 NE State St No. 418 Olympia WA 98501) What comes to mind when I hear the name Elliot Smith is the epitome of indie awk folk. Sweet innocent folk songs and beautiful harmony. His songs have some angelic and Beatlesque quality to them. - Eva Silverman

SNAPCASE - *Progression Through Unlearning* (Victory) Is this the new wave of Hard Core? You bet your ass! Monstrously thick music, vocally distorted from other Hard Core bands and the one guitarist does this cool "tiddle tiddle" stuff. I wish it were longer! - Gary Mc.

Straight-forward hardcore that's better than most of the genre. The Quicksand-esque guitar harmonics added some needed personality. - Jon Clark

SOCCER - *The Gospel Truth* (Coolidge Records, 157 Coolidge Terr., Wycoff, NJ, 07481) This CD started out sounding like the Washington, D.C. band 3, one of my favorite bands of all time, but then the severe disappointment set in when the song kicked in with more of a Camper Van Beethoven/R.E.M. feel to it. Soccer are from Chapel Hill, NC and

their claim to fame is having Jerry Kee (of Duck-Kee Studios) in the band (and recording the album). This is college rock circa back when I was in college -- quirky, witty, jangly. I'd buy the 3 re-issue on Dischord instead. (www.gis.net/~coolidge) - Shawn Scallen

✓ **SOCIAL ACT** - *Spiritual Journeys* (WhyMe/Social Records, 2020 West Concord Place Chicago, IL 60647) Something this highly troublesome decade could use more of is good ol' fashioned gumption -- y'know, that now increasingly scarce ability to persevere through the absolute worst that life tosses at you and keep on going undeterred. Thankfully, this wonderfully scruffy Chicago band possesses this glorious quality in spades. Alternating between frail, lilting introspective ballads and rugged, sinewy hard-rock anthems, these guys offer one song after another which staunchly affirms mankind's capacity for enduring numerous hardships with startling resilience. Beautifully produced, with strong vocals, a persistently upbeat, but practical and realistic sensibility, marvelously full and swelling arrangements, and a stirring, rough-edged, full-bore sonic approach to banging out a tune, this is one album that'll give you the necessary strength to roll with any punches life throws at you. Terrific. - Joe Wawrzyniak

SOFA GLUE (Ransom Note Recordings, PO Box 40164, Bellevue, WA 98015) Slappy hardcore.... reminiscent of Murphy's Law, but definitely not as good. Another New York hardcore band except these guys are from Washington. - Stacey H.

SOCIAL DISTORTION - *White Light, White Heat, White Trash* (550 Music/Epic) I started getting worried about these guys around the time that *Prison Bound* came out. After a string of so-so albums that only hinted at their true potential, I picked this one up with some hesitation. Fortunately, I had the luck of seeing these cats on a very early date of their current tour, so I kinda knew what to expect from the album. Or so I thought. I was hooked within the first few notes, and it only gets better with repeated listenings. No excursions into blues or country on this slab - just straight ahead slash and burn punk and roll, with a couple of very touching ballads tossed in for good measure. This is a truly great album, and in my opinion, the best one they've done. Though sometimes the subject matter is heavy and even depressing, there is a redemptive quality to this record that cannot be ignored. These topics are more relevant to me as an adult who has dived into (and still swims) some of the same rivers of shit that Mike Ness has endured, just as *Mommy's Little Monster* was once so vitally relevant to me as a kid. A day does not go by that I don't throw this one on at least once. Get it. - David Brock.

SON VOLT - *Straightaway* (Warner Brothers) This highly troubled decade sure ain't too conducive when it comes to trudging up anything to feel happy and comfortable about, a point which is driven home with spare, low-key, rueful eloquence on this rather downbeat, but still engrossing CD. Lead singer Jay Farrar's nasal, reedy voice and the stark, straightforward clarity of his songwriting, coupled with the crisp, watertight tunefulness of the arrangements and the slow, gentle, relaxed, radio-friendly sound (it's basically light, poppy rock with a smidgen of mournful, off-handed country tossed in as extra seasoning), effortlessly draws in the listener for a less-than-uplifting, yet very compelling, thoughtful, and gorgeously harmonious musical excursion into the pained, just barely still beating heart of contemporary ennui and despair. - Joe Wawrzyniak

SPARKMARKER - *500wattburneratseven* (Crisis Records, PO Box 5332, Huntington Beach, CA 92615-5232) Kind of a cross between the Touch&Go sound and the San Diego/Headhunter sound. Sorta heavy, sorta grandiose, sorta emo. At its best, the songs move and rock. At times, some of the songs can drag a bit, and sound a little too generic. But the overall result is a positive one. The last track is a half-hour long artsy thing that was interesting at times, but at other times it just went on way too long. Lots of instrumental noise with a very personal and depressing tirade. - Paul Silver

SPEARM - *Happy* (1840 Gaffey St. #111, San Pedro, CA 90731) Fun guitar riffs on the darker side. Distorted male voice pounds through the rock. -Eva S.

SPEED QUEENS (Sympathy For The Record Industry) The kind of band I wanted to be in when I started playing guitar. Thing is, I didn't have a garage or a cervix. Stripped-down, basic blasts of punk rock (emphasis on 'raw') snottier than flu season and mean as fuck. A few of these songs are less than two minutes long, which is always a plus, and the opening track is named after the band, which never ceases to make me all happy. None too shabby from a band that could, from the sound of it, beat up most of the wimpy bands that think they're badass. - Mike Fournier

SPLITSVILLE - *Ultrasound* (Big Deal, PO Box 2072, New York NY 10009) Health Advisory: Splitsville's cut-and-paste power pop is so sugary it may

induce diabetic shock. But if you've got a musical sweet tooth, you'll probably be as charmed as I was by this riff-stealing trio fronted by the Huseman twins, formerly of The Greenberry Woods. "Let's Go" gets you in the mood by copping the bass line from "My Sharona" and the spell-out chant from the Bay City Rollers' "Saturday Night." Hints of everything from Cheap Trick to CSN&Y surface in the creamy harmonies and C30-C60-C90 Go! power-pop licks that follow. Yummy yummy yummy. And they're from Iowa, yet. - Jim T.

SQUATWEILER - *New Motherstamper* (SpinArt) I am thanking the Gods of great music for allowing this unbelievable disc to come into my possession. I have been waiting for some new, good music to listen to. My waiting is over. Every single of the 11 songs are unreal, fast paced power punk. When female vocals were invented, this is what they had in mind! If you don't want to take my word for it, take Henry Rollins' - he likes them too. Buy this disc. - Denis Sheehan

STANDPOINT - *Whatever* (Smorgasbord Records, 50 Woodstock Road, Carmel, NY 10512) Now, this is different from what I expected! A nice surprise, too. It sounds like kind of a blend of the intensity of straight-edge hardcore, the passion of emo, and the noisy textures of Sonic Youth, with neo-Goth-like female vocals. Unique and interesting to listen to. - Paul Silver

STARFISH - *Frustrated* (Trance Syndicate) The first two tracks are richly atmospheric and then, Bam! We're hit in the head with a demonstration of what a damned good noise band they are. They can groove, jam, screech, sing, compose, play, and write - grabbing your head by the ears and demanding your attention. I suggest you give it to them. Starfish offers variety - noise, atmosphere, depth, and quality. It's an offering you should not refuse. - Michael Chant

STARMARKET - *Sunday's Worst Enemy* (Delores Records, Drottninggatan 52, 411 07 Goeborg, Sweden) Every once in a while a band comes along and just sucks me right in, the lyrics, the hooks, the energy, I can't help but to read along with the lyric sheet word for word, Starmarket is that band. Taking the ultra melodic guitar sounds of bands like Samiam and Sugar, Starmarket make them their own and end up leaving you breathless. If this band ever touches US soil, please let me know, I'll book them a show! - Rick K.

KINNIE STARR - *Tidy* (Violet Inch Records, #473-916 W.Broadway, Vancouver BC Canada V5Z1K7) Kinnie Starr isn't a stage name, it's her real name. Her album is quite diverse. Spoken word, funky beat, interesting non-exclusive lyrics and fun tunes make this CD unique...and remember, TV is crack for the masses. - Eva Silverman

✓ **STATIC 13** - *Eye Won't Fool I* (PO Box 20195, Greeley Sq. Sta., NYC 10001) Since the keystone of indie rock is usually intimacy, it's both unusual and entertaining to hear a local unsigned band go for unfettered arena rock excess. To a point. Static 13 do it with big ballsy production and power ballad posturing ala' Led Zep and Heart. But a few more hooks - the reason we liked Led Zep and Heart in the first place - wouldn't have hurt. - Jim Testa

STAVESACRE - *Absolutes* (Tooth and Nail, PO Box 12698, Seattle WA 98111) A very impressive virgin release from this band comprised of former California hardcore acts. Singer Mark Solomon (ex Crucified) delivers harmonic, emotional vocals that are complimented by progressive yet heavy melodies. This is one of those rare bands that has the musical prowess to combine powerful sonic blasts with hypnotic hooks into a swirling mass of memorable post hardcore. While there are flashes of the members early hardcore roots, the band expands these horizons by creating a unique and stirring record full of excellence and emotion. The bands displays their wide array of skills on the longer tracks such as "The Two Heavens" and "Zzyzx Scarecrow". I was hooked after the first two tracks, "Shiv" and "Sand Dollar". All of this record is well articulated and deserving of your time. Excellent. - Rich Quinlan

STEM - *Forever Up* (Ignition) Stem keeps getting compared to a young Rage Against The Machine, which captures the tone (driving phase-shifted breakbeat guitars, rapped vocals) but not the substance, since Stem's lyrics stress the personal over the political. It makes sense that lead singer Ocean started out as a drummer; his rhythmic sense is uncanny and his b-boy personal drives these six tracks. - Jim T.

File these guys under hardcore-influenced hip hop. This is a very strong showing for this very young Jersey shore band. - Gary Mc.

STERLING - *Monster Lingo* (Mantra/Beggars Banquet) A pox on the next thousand generations of the A & R guy who decided that fairly nondescript English twerps playing hackneyed poppy rock wasn't already overdone..... -

Mike Fournier

STIGMATA - *Hymns for an Unknown God* (Too Damn Hype/Chord Records, PO Box 1520 Cooper Station, New York, NY 10276) Rather than blistering hardcore or mind-rattling metal, Stigmata settles instead on imitation Type O-Negative style doom metal with an occasional burst of speed. They seem fixated with religious symbolism, which can grow tiresome after a while, since it has been done so many times before. While the guitar playing here is a classic metal style, lead singer Riley delivers his vocals in a Life of Agony vein, ranging from a low growl to an angered yelp, but never attaining real emotion. On the plus side, the band does feature some very cool samples, including an excerpt of Jim Jones' final sermon. However, in the end, Stigmata is another metal band dealing with the problem of being a metal band in the 90's. They attempt to cross over and add hardcore elements, but their music becomes tired, and the band sounds confused. The members do their best to sound dangerous and scary, but it just does not work - although I'd probably love this if I was in 8th grade right now. - Rich Quinlan

STRONG ARM - *The Advent of a Miracle* (Tooth and Nail) Strongarm is another example of forceful, emotional hardcore from the Tooth and Nail label. The band is led by the rough, dry vocals of Chris Carbonell. Musically, Strongarm constantly alters their sound, never sticking to a formula, which keeps this record interesting. Lyrically, the band tackles philosophical questions of truth and faith. Positive, religious messages permeate these songs, examples being "Council of Perfection", (which also displays a more melodic side of Strongarm), "Measure of Consequence" and "The Fall of Babylon". While there are moments of blistering attacks by guitarists Nick Dominquez and Josh Colbert, this tandem are still capable of conveying beautiful expressions of emotion on the title track and "Increase". The songs are kept under control by the solid rhythm section Steven Kleisath and Chad Neptune and drums and bass respectively. This is more interesting than the majority of emo-core out there, and the band truly believes in what they are saying. - Rih Quinlan

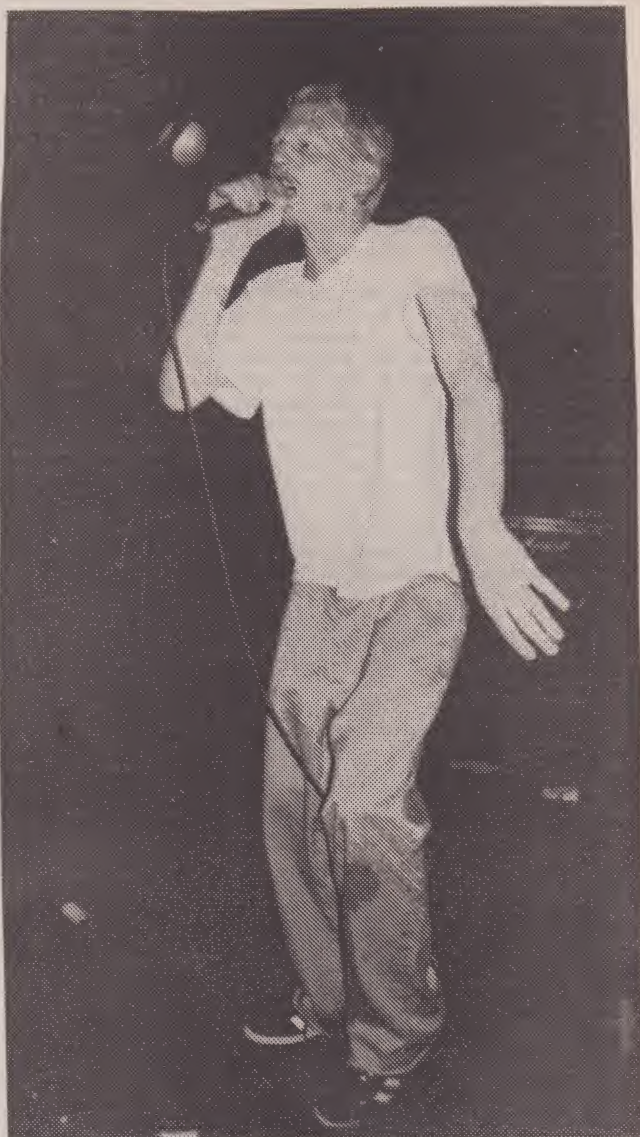
SUMMERCAMP - *Pure Juice* (Maverick) There's just something about self-deprecating pop albums that I hold dear to my heart. It's like they're allowing you to enjoy their own pitiful existence. - Gary Mc.

SUNDAY PUNCHER - *Livid Eye* (Turnbuckle, 163 3rd Ave #435, NYC 10003) Noisy and very anti-Rock (that means distorted.) I'm not supposed to review things this way, but in this case, it's warranted: Sunday Puncher have the rhythms of Girls Against Boys, the noisiness of Nation Of Ulysses, and the angst of Superchunk. I like them a whole bunch! - Gary Mc.

SUNSHINE BLIND - *Liquid* (Energy Records) Sunshine Blind's hauntingly beautiful music has enough aggressive bursts to create a well balanced attack. The angelic voice of Caroline Blind carries the majority of the album, most noticeably on songs like "This Longing", "Child" and "Noone". Sunshine Blind's sound may remind you of Sisters of Mercy (which is not a bad thing,) using wild atmospheres within their songs without ever letting the tracks get out of control. The well-conceived beats and synth range from up-tempo, nearly dance-like to painstakingly ethereal, while CWHK and Caroline's guitar work allow the band to experiment with moods. The band even throws in a version of A Flock of Seagulls early 80's staple, "I Ran" for fun, completely darkening the ultra-poppy sound of the original. Other tunes worth hearing are "Release", the gorgeous "Bush Almost a Tree" and the record's closer, "Rain Spirit". - Rich Quinlan

SUBINCISION (Beach Recordings, 1230 Market ST., Suite 135, San Francisco, CA 94102). This is a punk rock band. 1979. They got the hair, the combat boots, the spikes. I started laughing in the first verse of the first song. A good hard laugh, the song is hysterical. But the joke gets old real fast. By the third song I was disappointed. When it works the joke is great. When it doesn't it bombs. Self-conscious to a fault, these songs are about the punk scene, drinking, girls, the army. There are standouts: Frustration, Speed for Nico, No Molestas, the break in Kerouac, 12-Pack Girlfriend, Anti-Bark Device. Other songs lose the humor entirely, and stabbing at seriousness, they kill it quick. While the vocals get pedantic, the guitar, bass and drums bear just as much responsibility when it doesn't work. The songs that don't work feel thrown together in a way that doesn't survive the process. This doesn't hold together well as an album listening experience, but live it's got to be a great party. - Alex Saville

SUPERSUCKERS - *Must've Been High* (SubPop) Recording with Willie Nelson and Steve Earle and playing at Farm Aid must have been near-religious experiences for the 'suckers 'cause how else do you explain the resurrection of this scorching punk band as a COUNTRY band? But before you turn up your nose and say you hate country music, maybe you should take a long hard look at who comes to your mind when you think country



STEM

Photo by Jim Testa

music? Garth Brooks, maybe? Reba McEntire? Is this what you really think of when you hear the words "country music"? Well, here's some news for ya- that ain't country, at least not REAL country, not good country. Shit is shit, no matter how hard you try to polish it. All of the fun and the spirit and the heart is gone out of it these days, with very few exceptions. This record is one of those exceptions. Yea, it's still a Supersuckers record, with all of the things that make all of their other records Supersuckers records (it's not like they lost their sense of humor or somethin'), but there is beauty on here, something that I am not at all used to finding on one of their slabs. "Hungover Together Again", a duet with Kelley Deal, nearly moved me to tears. It hit very close to home, a little too close if you ask me. How can you ask for any more out of a song? "Roadworn and Weary" is another one that got me right in the old ticker, and I can swear I hear Willie himself singing on this track, even though his name ain't anywhere on this thing. But I know Willie when I hear him. I lived in Texas. I should know. Through the humor on this record is sincerity and honesty, the very things that contemporary country music is missing. ALL HAIL THE SUPERSUCKERS!! - David Brock

SUPERSUCKERS - *Must've Been High* (SubPop) Wow! This is a really great record and isn't some cheezy attempt by the Suckers to play country. This record stands on its own as a great country album, and I don't mean lame-ass 90's country schlock like Garth Brooks or Billy Ray Cyrus, I'm

talking music with real heart and grit like ol' Hank Williams and Johnny Cash. This CD would be great for gettin' drunk to, or driving at night, down some old country road with the windows rolled down. Is there nothing these rock n' roll hellions can't do? - Rick K.

✓ **SURREAL** (Melting Palette Records, 225 W. 20 St. #5E, NYC 10011) I bumped into this Long Island band years ago in the worst possible circumstances - a crappy gig at a Lower East Side bar - and have been hooked ever since. Surreal plays airy, dreamy, romantic and quite beautiful pop songs, with shimmering guitars and delicate, heart-tweaking vocals. The band hasn't completely outgrown its hippie vibe but this new 6-song's exquisite production and the clear-eyed intelligence of vocalist Alan Semerdjian's lyrics show the band continues to mature and grow. - Jim Testa

SWEETBELLY FREAKDOWN (Jade Tree Records, 2310 Kennwynn Rd. Wilmington DE19810) There is a cool mix of manic screaming, furious fits of energy and moments of harmony all rolled into one on this self-titled release from this re-named reunion of the class DC hardcore band Swiz. Sweetbelly Freakdown seem to gain intensity and power as the disc progresses, reaching its climax on "Daydream" ("I don't know if I should thank you/or cut your throat"), and the highly intense "Victims Complex". The band has traces of the standard D.C. guitar swirl, led by Jason Farrell, but their ability to completely spin out of control and then regain their composure makes comparisons with most DC bands unfair. Shawn Brown's vocals lead the band through the madness. While the opening tracks "Pleas to the Action Figure" and "MCR" are a bit plodding, the disc overall is moving and stirring. - Rich Q.

SWINDLE - *Within These Walls* (Grilled Cheese/Cargo Music) Paint-by-numbers punk rock. Late teens with early eighties English punk hairdos, Converse sneakers, big pants, and the entire Epitaph and Fat Wreck Chords catalogs. Sure to be a hit with others like-minded. - Mike Harbin

TAKAKO MINEKAWA - *Roomie Cube* (March, POB 578396, Chicago IL 60657) There's not much in the way of non-electronica on here, really; the occasional guitar and whistles that may or may not be computer generated. This is a drugged-out day in an amusement park stuffed to the gills with yr favorite Japanimation characters. Some of these songs spin jauntily around like a carousel ride gone awry, while others serve as the soundtrack to sneaking behind the burger hut to smoke out before heading off to watch the Floyd lightshow again. Cute and silly, cute and moody. - Mike Fournier

TEN YARD FIGHT - *Hardcore Pride* (Equal Vision, PO Box 14, Hudson NY 12534) This Boston based outfit began as a group of friends hacking around in a less than serious straight-edge band, which used football metaphors to describe their views about life. However, after a few shows, the band decided to truly dedicate themselves to their music and their message. This disc shows both sides of this band, with the first six tracks comprising their "Hardcore Pride" EP, and being by far the stronger collection of songs. Ten Yard Fight has a rough around the edges sound that is compensated by intense energy and great scream-along vocals. "Forever", "Hardcore Pride" and "Believe" are well articulated pieces of straightedge without becoming morally superior like so many bands have the tendency to do. The seven tunes which were recorded as the bands first demo are fun, goofy hardcore, but they are not without their moments of inspiration. Songs like "Pit of Equality" and "Enough" are funny, yet they also display the foundation of the sound that TYF was building. You are given an opportunity to hear how far this band has come in less than two years. Cool stuff. - Rich Q.

✓ **TENSION NY** - *...And At The Hour of Our Death* (None of the Above, PO Box 654, Farmingdale NY 11738) This is ungodly heavy, pounding hardcore with some blaring metal influences. Each song is delivered full throttle with anger and intensity. This is a non-stop, anti-emo explosion of power and aggression. Tight rhythms combine with raw, grinding vocals along with

some cool samples, including a couple from Star Wars (that won me over right there). You will drool over the playing, but pay careful attention to the honesty of the lyrics in songs like "Who Asked You", "Hate Control", "Torn Apart" and "The End". In addition to all of this, there is a very special hidden track that is worth waiting for. I must admit, normally these hardcore-cum-metal outfits bore me to tears, but this is truly incredible. - Rich Q.

THATCHER ON ACID - *Curdled/The Moondance* (Broken, P.O. Box 460402, San Francisco, CA 94146-0402). A re-release of an LP and EP by this 80's British band, plus a live recording from '87. For fans only, I'd say. The cheesy 80's effects and production really don't age well. - Jon Clark

THERION - *Thell* (Nuclear Blast America) Make no mistake, it's Black Metal, but you know what, it's FUCKING GREAT!! Take away the throaty vocals of most Death Metal bands, add a full choir, and you get Therion. This blew me away. I can't go on enough about this group. I'm babbling because it's so darn good! Somebody help me! Powerful use of voice, guitars, synths, and drums. Buy this before I punch myself! - Gary McGarvey

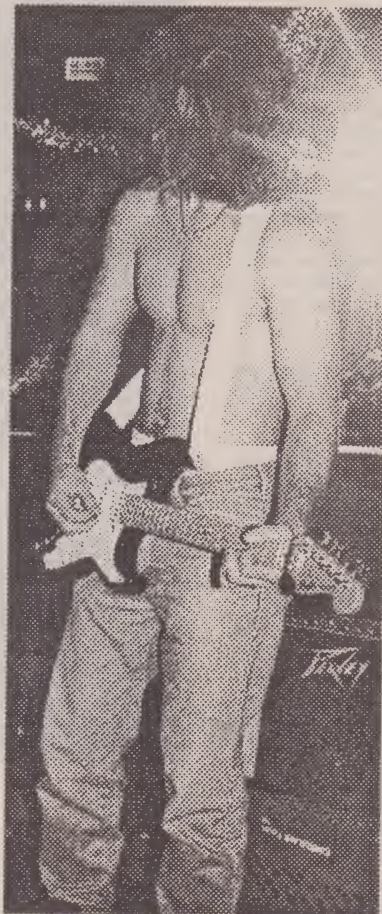
TIGER - *Shining In The Wood* (Bar None) Remember early 80's music (no, not Kaja Goo Goo)? Bands like the Rezzillos, Buzzcocks etc. Well I like that kind of pop-punk, so if you share my enthusiasm for this kind of music, then by all means, get this. - Gary Mc.

TIMES SQUARE - *Learn It* (Peep Show, 65 W 96 St. Suite 28E, NYC 10025) Female fronted, three piece punk outfit. Features Bobby Steele on bass; if that's a selling point to you, get it. If that's not a selling point to you, avoid this at all costs. - TMF.

TINY LIGHTS - *The Smaller The Grape, The Sweeter The Wine* (Bar None Records) Hoboken's Tiny Lights have been on something of a hiatus - lead singer Donna Croughn and her husband, guitarist John Hamilton, recently had their first child - but the group has returned to the fray with one of their most consistent and ear-pleasing albums to date. In the past, Tiny Lights has been known for their eclecticism, combining everything from swirling psychedelic ballads to high-energy party jams and funkified Jackson 5 covers. *The Smaller The Grape...*, which the band says was inspired by Dusty Springfield's groundbreaking mid-60's LP *Dusty In Memphis*, focuses the group's abundant talent into mid-tempo pop tunes with a dollop of white soul. Croughn's mellifluous vocals and Hamilton's rich and varied guitar work complement one another perfectly, especially on the songs where the two combine their voices in perfect two-part harmony. Bassist Dave Dreiwitz contributes his usual melodic bass lines, Andy Burton and Andy Demos fill out the mix with piano, mellotron, tenor sax, and percussion, and new drummer Ron Horton adds crisp, unintrusive rhythms. Jim Mastro's sure hand as producer on most of the tracks undoubtedly helped keep the band's free spirits in check, resulting in this long-lived combo's most satisfying work yet. - Jim Testa

TIPSY - *Trip Tease* (Asphodel, PO Box 51, Chelsea Station, NY, NY 10113) This is a very odd record. Not so much because it is a strange sounding record, but more because of how normal it sounds. Now I understand as much as anybody that normality is subjective,

but in this sense, I refer to the mainstream, not to the mainstream of the '90's, but the mainstream of some alternative past, history that is not too different, but different enough that we give it a second look. I refer to the '50's and '60's - not greasers and hippies and Elvis and LSD, but the lounge lizards and tiki torches and martinis and Martin Denny and Esquivel. And here's the soundtrack - only the second record I've ever heard that truly deserves to be called "Space Age Bachelor Pad Music" (that honor goes to Jean-Jacques Perrey and Gershon Kingsley's 1966 Space Age Classique "The In Sound From Way Out!"). Sure they've used the familiar lounge oeuvre as a launching pad, but their mix of digital and analog instrumental fare cut-up and pasted together again coupled with a sense of history (as much as they appear to respect their forefathers, they also appear to realize that the past is the past and nothing can bring it back. No sharkskin and wingtips here!), keep this from sounding at all dated. A real accomplishment. Oh yeah, it's great make-out music AND you can dance to it. - David Brock



SURREAL

Photo by Jim T.

TODOS TU MUERTOS - *Dale Aborigen* (Grita! PO Box 1216, New York, NY 10156) Musically this is a good album, it contains punk, reggae, metal and strange stuff too. Since I took Latin and not Spanish in college, I didn't understand one dang word. If you don't pay attention to lyrics this is cool, otherwise it's an effort in futility. - Gary Mc.

TOUCHCANDY - *The Nights Of Touch Candy Part 1* (Septic Tank, PO Box 26B97, LA CA 90026) Album cover is super cute. It really pisses me off how the songs don't actually start till you are 30 seconds into the track. The whole album has a space theme. It's *interesting*. Dull but pretty soft rock. - Eva S.

THE TRANS-MEGETTI - *Steal the Jet Keys* (Art Monk Construction PO Box 6332 Falls Church Va 22040) A whirlwind musical explosion greets you on the opening track "Opposite of Techno" and the record just takes off from there. On one level, this is great rock n' roll, but this disc goes much deeper than that. A heavy dose of post-punk adrenalin mixes with inventive arrangements to create a compelling experience. This will remind most of Rocket From the Crypt or Drive Like Jehu, but this takes the idea of noisy guitar and heartfelt vocals much further. The vocals are what stood out for me. They are sometimes melodic, sometimes pained, but they are constantly manipulated throughout the disc. This is most noticeable on the songs "Rent a Rocket", "Excluding My Me" and the sonic "One Step Above a Trailor." Find this before your friends do. - Rich Quinlan

TRICIA and the SUPERSONICS - *King Bravo Selects SKA Authentic* (Moon) What happens when you put together a bunch of older Jamaican musicians? They play old time traditional Ska, silly. Makes me feel like I'm in Jamaica at some out of the way club enjoying the true sounds of Ska. Thank You, Moon Records! - Gary Mc.

TUGBOAT ANNIE - *Wake Up and Disappear* (Big Top, 955 Mass Ave, Suite 115, Cambridge, MA 02139) In the tradition of Buffalo Tom at their best, Tugboat Annie are purveyors of fuzzed-out hardass pop songs that are just unpoppy enough so that they don't become the songs that stick in yr head for a zillion days in a row, causing you to go insane. That's to say that these songs may stick around in your head for a while, but won't bring with 'em insanity or the urge to open up on a post office. Why? I think a good deal of it is the sincerity. After a listen, I knew that these guys meant it. I could just tell. And, as a result, I think that's why this disc is so much better than 95% of the other bands playing on the same field. - Mike Fournier

UGLY BEAUTY - *The Sweetness* (Atlantic) Mostly unassuming, bouncy, alterna-pop music. It generally works on that level, but the ballads tend to drag a bit. Nothing stands out as a great track or a really lousy track. - Paul Silver

U.K. SUBS - *Quintessential 20th Anniversary, Part I* (New Red Archives) Charlie Harper and Nicky Garrett have been around longer as the UK Subs than most of the people who read Jersey Beat. This album might be some of their best work as we have actual song structures and harmonies, showing definite growth over their traditional scream and hate fests. I personally have a problem with their anti-gun stance, but politics aside, this is still a good album. - Tom B.

U.K. SUBS - *Riot* (Cleopatra) This is Part II of their anniversary collection. More in the old style of punk, but then again, these guys are old. Songs about tried and true punk topics of yesteryear such as riots, chemical war, and nuclear anarchy. "Paradise Burning" sounds a lot like the Clash's "London Calling" and Charlie Harper even sounds a bit like Johnny Rotten

on "Guilty Man." I guess with today's ongoing punk revival, you might as well hear the originals playing this stuff. - Tom B.

US MAPLE - "The Wanderer" EP (Sonic Bubblegum, PO Box 35504, Brighton, MA 02135) A very bizarre single from Sonic Bubblegum featuring Chicago's US Maple. The first song on this two song effort is a completely disjointed and indecipherable version of Dion and the Belmonts' "The Wanderer". US Maple's interpretation has absolutely nothing to do with the original at all, for the song crawls along at a painfully slow pace while splashes of instrumentation ebb and flow in the background and hushed vocals almost entirely conceal the original lyrics. It is difficult to follow an opening like that, yet "Whoa Complaints" is a nice attempt. This is a bit more organized with Slint-like guitar and indie rock noise messiness. This is not really my thing, but you cannot help but listen out of curiosity. - Rich Quinlan



TRANS-MEGETTI

Photo by Justin Borucki

VAPORHEAD (Paradigm, 67 Irving Place So., NYC 10003) Identi-kit Pop Punk, so calculatedly wacky that it made my teeth hurt. If you can color inside the lines, you can make records like this too. - Jim T.

VARNALINE (Zero Hour Records, 14 West 23rd. St., NY, NY 10010) Varnaline's 1996 release, *Man of Sin*, showed singer/songwriter Anders Parker to be an unusual contrast to the average '90's rock-n-roller. Perhaps it was his honesty, his compassion, or it might have been due to the fact that he's mortal. You know, all those characteristics you don't hear on the radio. Whatever it was that set him apart from the herd, he's still got it. Varnaline's new album (self-titled), finds Anders working with the hard-driving rhythm section that he recruited right after completing his first solo Varnaline effort, *Man of Sin*. This is a winning combination of musicians. Jud Ehrbar's dreamy backing vocals and succinct approach to the drums along with John Parker's rolling bass lines act as footnotes to Anders' sincere songwriting. In Varnaline's confessional, powerheart brand of rock-n-roll, all that is personal and intense comes bubbling to the surface: themes of loneliness, misunderstanding, and various other tailor-made emotional pangs receive full attention here. In "Really Can't Say," you can almost feel your heart beating in your unaccepting head while Anders repeats, "I really can't say to you, 'goodbye'". Many Neil Young comparisons have been made when referring to Parker's songwriting, but that immediately classifies him in an unjust category. True, the work of each have many common threads, but with the addition of the new rhythm section, there is a volatile subtlety of jazz in the foundation, and Anders' focused guitar work brings out aspects also found in the likes of the late Big Star (and the Replacements). This is a perfect album dealing with a less than perfect world. - Greg Matherly

VEGETARIAN MEAT (No. 6 Records, PO Box 5037, New York NY 10185) Written by Alex McAuley and mixed by Wharton Tiers. What can you expect? One song is weird guitar noise, and the next is totally melodic rock dealing with falling in love. - Eva Silverman

✓ **VEHICLE** - *Can't Get to Memphis* (Schizphonic Records, 232 SE Oak #100, Portland OR 97412) Vehicle is a songwriting fan's dream - 11 tracks played with earnestness and conviction by three guys who look like they would be completely unfazed should stardom ever come their way. Can't Get to Memphis features the poignant, off-beat humor of singer/songwriter John Vinzant. Vinzant writes heartfelt, folk-influenced anthems that reveal a love of both pop and energetic rock. He couples this with a distinctive, albeit not all that powerful voice which hovers in each song drenched in a fuzz that only adds to its authentic feel. Vehicle is a rarity in music, for they tell

with earnestness and conviction by three guys who look like they would be completely unfazed should stardom ever come their way. Can't Get to Memphis features the poignant, off-beat humor of singer/songwriter John Vinzant. Vinzant writes heartfelt, folk-influenced anthems that reveal a love of both pop and energetic rock. He couples this with a distinctive, albeit not all that powerful voice which hovers in each song drenched in a fuzz that only adds to its authentic feel. Vehicle is a rarity in music, for they tell stories with their songs. Bassist Andy Ricker and drummer BIG E create a solid backbeat behind Vinzant's steady guitar playing. The attitude of this band is best captured in the track "Fast Talker" which is an accurate depiction of big city life and the shallowness that accompanies it. The members wear their honesty and laid back approach on their sleeves, yet do not be led to believe that these are a bunch of indie slackers. The songs here are well crafted, hone efforts which will earn your respect with each successive listen. While the term indie rock may be long since dead from overuse, there are still bands out there who embrace its ideals and understand that strong music starts with strong songs. While all of the material here is easy to like, "Color-blind", "The Lonely Crowd" and "Inner Garden" are exceptional. Try this one on punk rockers. - Rich Quinlan

THE VENTS - *Venus Again* (MCA/Cargo Records) Hope has become something of a rare commodity in this overly pessimistic decade, so it's always a welcome relief to come across some folks who have somehow managed to retain the capacity to look forward to things and -- gasp! -- even enjoy life. The Vents, a crackerjack California foursome, are such a bunch, combining raspy vocals, a generous, giving, joyous spirit, a hugely appealing upbeat attitude, a grungy, tuneful, crunching, chargin' ahead with a sure, steady, purposeful clip sound, a striking, heart-warming vulnerability, and thoughtful, constantly lookin' up lyrics into one wholly winning package. Sweetly endearing and crisply produced, this album measures up as a positively life-affirming little beaut. - Joe Wawrzyniak

VIBRALUSH (Interscope) Generic alterna-rock group who can't decide whether they want to be Pearl Jam, Bush, or the Gin Blossoms. They should be congratulated for creating the musical equivalent of Olestra - Vibralush has an unpleasant aftertaste and goes right through you without leaving anything behind. - Rob Thornton

VISION - *One and the Same* (Corrupted Image Records, 739 Manor Street, Lancaster PA 17603) Since their inception in the late 80's Vision has consistently played melodic hardcore that, while it did not stand out, was solid and catchy. This disc features several sides of the band. The majority of the release is new studio material, but there are three live tracks, and one recording from 1988 as well. The '88 recording of "What's Inside" gives fans new and old a glimpse of what Vision was like as a young, hungry band. When it is compared to the material recorded in late 1996, not much has changed. While they have matured as musicians and dumped the seemingly endless hardcore breaks from their songs, their dedication to harmonious hardcore remains in tact. The true highlights of the disc are the three live tracks taped at CBGBs last October. Vision proves itself to be a live band, for these songs are far heavier and more intense than their studio counterparts. While I was not that impressed with the disc, I did become interested in catching the band live. Long time fans will crave this, but *One in the Same* is not mandatory listening. - Rich Q.

THE VOLEBEATS - *Sky & Ocean* (SafeHouse) Detroit might be associated with a more powerful sound, but here you'll find acoustic guitar ballads of loneliness, heartache, and alienation that merge pop, folk, and country sounds. It's interesting that each band member writes his own songs, yet everything meshes nicely, with lyrics that plead for understanding in our personal relationships. - Tom B.

WALT MINK - *Colossus* (Deep Elm, Box 1965, NYC 10156) More commercial alternative rock for you to despise. Maybe I'm just being a jaded pain in the ass, but at times like these I appreciate the mega-labels who pump out those one-hit wonders. At least I know I'll enjoy one song per album. - Gary Mc.

WAREHOUSE - *Static* (Faded Image, PO Box 295, Sommerdale, NJ 08083) Pseudo-alternative pop-rock with synthesizers. I dunno, the synths and the alternative rock don't seem to go together very well. And the overall effect is very like some of the crappy pop of late 70s and early 80s. - Paul Silver

WEEN - *The Mollusk* (Elektra) The latest installment from Gene & Dean is a warped collection of soggy tunes recorded at the Jersey shore, ranging from deranged children's music to a bawdy sea chanty to a thumping little country-western number that sounds like a leftover from 12 *Golden Country Greats*. Some of the weird psychedelic stuff is pretty cool, Aaron's (that is, Gene's) voice gets so twisted you'd never guess it was the same singer on every track unless you already know Ween, and Mickey (that is, Dean) is

getting pretty good on guitar. Still, you don't listen to Ween for the righteous riffs or the subtle in-jokes, you listen for the yuks. And I suspect that if you're not really stoned when you listen, you probably won't find this all that funny. - Jim T.

WELLCURBS - *Satellites* (Wellcub Music, 6 Grove St., Wanaque, NJ 07465) Very much U2-like alterna-rock, faux-angst vocals included. Not very original and not very exciting. At least it's only a four song CD, so the pain was short-lived. - Paul Silver

THE WELLWATER CONSPIRACY - *Declaration of Conformity* (Third Gear Records, P.O. Box 1886 Royal Oak, MI 48068) Psychedelic music was one of the more gloriously wiggled-out '60s rock sub-genres: brooding, berserk, heady, and tirelessly experimental, with an admirable disdain for easy, accessible commercial hooks and a total eagerness for boldly venturing into heretofore unknown oddball sonic realms. This beautifully trippy three-some cover all the mondo nutso bases with galvanizing aplomb: muffled vocals, pounding drums, blistering, heavily echoed fuzztone guitar, spacey



lyrics, unpredictable, wildly erratic tempos, loose, meandering melodies which wander all over the aural map, sudden rhythmic changes, an appropriately out there cover of a Syd Barrett song, pull-out-all-the-stops instrumental arrangements (the mini-moog is an especially nice touch) and a pronounced emphasis on mood over punch. Like all top-drawer psychedelic music this album is bloated, self-indulgent, and ridiculously excessive -- and all the better for it, too. A truly incredible mind roaster of an album. - Joe Wawrzyniak

WHITE OUT - *Superglide* (Eat Me Records, 485 Tabor St, Long Branch, NJ 07740) Music sounds like Sponge watered down a bit. Vocals sound like Bruce Dickenson (Iron Maiden) on his solo album. Other than "I'm Getting Down," none of the songs caught my attention. - Den S.

DAVID WILCOX - *Turning Point* (Koch Records, 2 Tri-Harbor Court, Port Washington NY 11050) During his stint in Nashville, David Wilcox earned a well-deserved reputation as a masterful tunesmith, a true craftsman carving songs out of pieces of country, folk, rock and blues music. Like many aspiring stars before him, the "Music Row" label establishment had no idea how to "position" him as an performer, i.e. they wouldn't really recognize skill and dedication in an artist if it bit them on the ass. As such, Wilcox is currently an independent agent, and I predict that it will do him well. *Turning Point* is a wonderful example of Wilcox's work, offering up a dozen engaging songs delivered in a singer/songwriter vein. Wilcox's attraction lies in his ability to create connections to his listeners through lyrical vignettes with universal appeal. It adds a degree of accessibility missing in Nashville's assembly-line musical product. Although not a style of music usually covered in *Jersey Beat*, aspiring artists would do well in their own right to check out Wilcox and discover just how good honest songwriting can be. - ReverendK

WITHOUT - ...And Anger Was a Warm Place To Hide (Fierce) This is another metal/hardcore hybrid that leads toward the heavier end of things. If you are looking for a band that takes this potentially dangerous combination and plays it well, you have found it. Musically, it is fairly standard aggressive fare, but at times, the band can surprise you, particularly with the guitar playing of Kevin Maloney, who ranges from brutal to ethereal as he chimes in with a solo piece called "All Souls". Other tracks worth checking out are "Second to One", "Out from Under" and the seven minute closer, "Last Judgement". Personally, I found this closer to metal than hardcore, which is fine, for this is quality stuff. Do not expect to have your life altered by the originality here, but this is a talented band and very heavy album. - Rich Q.

WITHSTAND - ...And Anger Was A Warm Place To Hide (Fierce/Mayhem) New School hardcore from New York State. By not being from NYC, their sound is closer to bands like Snapcase and Earth Crisis (both from upstate NY) but they throw in a little acoustic guitar for a change of pace. Worth checking out. - Gary Mc.

WONDERBOY - Napoleon Blown Apart (Racer Records) Now, here's a nice little slice of something pleasingly out of the ordinary done by an utterly winsome and witty Los Angeles pop-rock quartet: An engagingly quirky album which walks a fine, offbeat line between the serious and the facetious. This precarious balancing act is carried out with startling adroitness: The shortest tracks -- the totally nuts "Tick" and the absurdly giddy "Happy? That's Me!" -- display a blissfully inane tongue-in-cheek sensibility while the quietly heart-breaking anguish expressed in such songs as "Taken," "Unconditional Love," "Empty," and the especially poignant "Something's Missing" softly insinuates itself upon the listener with exquisite deftness. And the instrumental arrangements are an absolute toot: everything from trumpets to a French horn to even an accordion gets tossed into the wonderfully wigged-out mix! Lovely, man, just lovely. - Joe Wawrzyniak

WORKS ON BLUE - Straight To My Head (Aorta, Inc., 11210 Troy Rd., Rockville MD 20852) Works On Blue works on nerves. Vocalist John Frazier not only recalls Eighties hair metal, but manages to conjure up everything that was annoying about that era. From his first "Ohhhh... yeahyeahyeah-ah!" in "Big Brother" to his final screech in "The Flood," he sounds like some guy auditioning for Skid Row. The guitar is strictly parlor tricks; cheap attempts to add trippiness to bargain-basement metal, and the lyrics could have been written by any Fourth Grader watching an older sibling go through college. *Straight To My Head* should go straight into the trash. - Michael Chant

WYNONA RIDERS - Artificial Intelligence (Lookout Records) More like a CDEP if you ask me. I've always kept a special place in my heart for this band for having such a great name. Unfortunately, their music doesn't live up. This is just boring. - Dave T.

YAGE - Integration (Munster Records, Apdo.18107-18080 Madrid Spain) Yage has created a record full of guitar driven, sometimes speedy, but not at all memorable rock. The band spends the length of this disc floating between pop and rock, not quite sure if they want to get dirty, or if they want to stay cute and cuddly. This indecision creates a somewhat schizophrenic record that loses its flavor quickly. The band has to combat the handicaps of a singer without much range, and very little musical creativity. They show some promise on the rollicking, up tempo "Tselfisk", which features more focused vocals and a catchy guitar riff as its centerpiece. However, this one bright spot is obscured by thirteen other tracks which are basically one idea just presented in different speeds. There is even an ill-advised attempt at psychedelia on the instrumental "Rice Dream". The majority of this record sounded like a bad dream. I had a hard time getting through this one. - Rich Quinlan

YOU FANTASTIC - "Riddler" EP (Skin Graft Records Over Mid-America, PO BOX 257546, Chicago, IL 60625) No song titles, nothing but artwork, and it took me five times of reading through the press kit to finally guess that the band's name was You Fantastic. Weird. I think if I was on heroin, this would be great. But I'm only on two Dr. Peppers. - Dave T.

ZAO - The Splitter Shards the Birth of Separation (Tooth and Nail Records P. O. Box 12698 Seattle WA 98111) Reaaaaddddd! And Screeaaamm! Hardcore stuffed right into your mouth. -Eva S.

ZOUNDS - The Curse Of the Zounds (Broken, P.O. Box 460402, San Francisco, CA 94146-0402). A collection of singles from this political British punk/new wave band of the early 80's. Typical political lyrics set to music that reminded me alternately of Gang Of Four, early Talking Heads, and The Cramps. - Jon Clark

COMPILATIONS

AMERICAN SKA-THIC (Jump Up! USA, 4409 1/2 Greenview, Ste. 2, West Chicago, IL 60640) Compilations are wonderful! You get to sample a lot of groups without buying a bunch of CDs. Here are some of my favorites: The Exceptions - "I Hate Mornings;" Johnny Socko "Vasectomy;" Ten Cent Fun - "Skankin' In Moon Boots;" and Jack Kevorkian and his Suicide Machines (sound familiar?) - "Hey!" This series is great for Ska enthusiasts to find more of those Third Wave bands. - Gary McGarvey

BAD GIRLS GO TO HELL - Pussycats Vs. Bestias (Monster Records Apdo. 18107-28080 Madrid Spain) This CD is a split between two rawkin grrrl punk bands from Spain. The "Pussycats" have a fun, fast, pulsating sound that shares a good deal with the Lunachicks. They have a rough around the edges type sound but it only adds to the flavor. Next band up, the Bestias. They remind me a bit of an old 70's/early 80's English punk band (only they are girls with Spanish accents). The last song on the CD is a cover of Kiss' "Rock and Roll All Night." Together, both bands fill in the spaces where other split CD's leave off. It's been on repeat on my CD player for the past week. Good stuff right here. - Eva S.

THE BIG FIX (Allied Recordings, PO Box 460683, San Francisco CA 94146-0683) This is one of the finer comps that I have heard in awhile, for it did what all good compilations should - gave me an opportunity to sample some bands that I have heard of, but had never actually checked out. There are 22 solid tracks on this disc, all hard edged and punky in nature. *The Big Fix* begins with the excellent Cards in Spokes, who deliver a superb piece of hook-riddled punk called "Student Body". The disc stays strong with Florida's Discount, an incredible song from Needle called "Counterulture Wholesale", and a hip instrumental piece from Peaceful Meadows. You are also given an opportunity to experience the noise of Saint James Infirmary, the great ego-free guitar rock of Squidboy and my personal favorite, the female led, raw brilliance of Undergirl. In addition, there are tracks from J Church, the Fairlaines, My Life in Rain, Pezz, Stink and Self that also deserve listening. Overall, a great effort from Allied. - Rich Quinlan

BREAD, THE EDIBLE NAPKIN (No Idea, PO Box 14636, Gainesville, FL 32604-4636) This comp CD came with the latest issue of No Idea fanzine. It features 32 bands whose styles range from pop-punk to thrash to emo to ska-punk and everywhere in between. Lots of fast 'n' loud, energetic music to get you moving. Some standouts include No Empathy's snotty punk sound, Ash County Sluggers' melodic, slower tempo punk, and the intense emo of Christie Front Drive. Pung gives us "Anthem for Youth," a fast and furious old school punk tune, while Against All Authority presents "Corporate Takeover," a jumpin' ska-punk gem. And all this is in just the first third of the disc! Highly recommended! - Paul Silver

CAUGHT IN THE CYCLONE - OI STREETPUNK COLLECTION, VOL. I (Cyclone, 24 Pleasant Run, Merrimack NH 03054) Contributions range from my backyard (Wretched Ones, NJ) to Portugal's Mata Ratos. With the exception of California's Reducers, most of these bands are only known locally, if that. Decent overall and a good sampler of today's Oi! Scene, including tracks from Drop Kick Murphys and Dickey Boys. - Tom Brebric

THE CLASS OF 1997- Go Girl Go 2 Comp (Fret Free Records 108-22 Queens Blvd. Suite 226 Forest Hills NY 11375) I like the idea of an all-grrl music compilation. Unfortunately there was not too much that grabbed my attention on this one except for a couple of bands that I did enjoy: Killer Kowalski, a NYC based punk pop band with cute vocals, and The Librarians, a simple, soft rock band. Also, The Hush seem to be quite the happenin' shit with funky tunes and hip-hoppin beats. - Eva Silverman

CREEPY CRAWL LIVE - (Another Planet Records 740 Broadway New York, NY 10003) Oh..... how the memories of a Sunday Matinee at CB's came back to me... as I listened to this entirely live recording. This release is full of great classic New York Hard Core. The sound quality is good, and when it comes to listening to bands such as H2O, 25 Ta Life, Warzone, and Murphy's Law there is always something special about listening to them live. It's more than just music...and it comes out that way when you're at a show. - Stacey H.

DEATH... IS JUST THE BEGINNING 4 (Nuclear Blast) Latest in the series showing off the darkest bands of today. Some of my favorites are Amorphis, In Flames, Therion, Slapdash, Withered Beauty, Hypocrisy, and Dismember. A two-CD set for the price of one. Death doesn't come any cheaper. - Gary Mc.

EAST COAST ASSAULT II: The Second Coming (Too Damn Hype Records, PO Box 1520 Cooper Stn., New York, NY 10276-1520) This two CD comp features a myriad of hardcore and metal outfits from various

areas of the East Coast, but the majority of the bands here call New York their home. This comp is well put together, for you are given two to four songs from each act, allowing you to truly get a feel for what the band is about. Disc 1 is dominated by emotional hardcore from Negative Male Child, Struggle Within and Commin' Correct. Some highlights for me were the blistering speed of Fastbreak and the brutal power of Cutthroat and Indecision, who continue to write powerful, intelligent hardcore with introspective, questioning lyrics. Rainmen contribute two solid tracks, displaying a wide array of musical skill, but the real stars here were Enrage who played urgent, full throttle hardcore on tracks like "Rebirth" and "Shardy".

Disc 2 begins with a more metallic attack from Stigmata who come through with one of the finer songs on the disc, "Life for a Life". Step Aside and Inhuman will just destroy you with their aggression fueled speed punk. The heaviness continues with pummeling tracks from Mushroom, Train of Thought and Innerface. Some of this becomes a little repetitive and does not always segue well with the speedier, less heavy punk, but that is the only criticism here. Cease shines with two six minute tracks that are both musically interesting and relentless. In total, East Coast Assault delivers seventeen bands, fifty-five songs and over two hours of music. Very cool. - Rich Quinlan

JAPAN NITE SOUND SAMPLER (Produced By Japan Nite Committee, No Address) This is a Japanese compilation that showcases various Japanese bands from a multitude of Japanese labels. This is great. There are 9 bands and a total of 13 songs that cover practically every genre of rock. What is really interesting about this sampler is the effect it has on your view of Japanese/American culture blurring. Husking Bee make a powerful example of the influence of American pop-punk, Cocco is an unbelievable attempt at imitating Alanis Morissette, Lolita No.18 have a '60s psycho-garage grind, and Petty Booka even manage to capture the rollicking essence of bluegrass in their fiddle jammin', banjo pickin', "Fujiyama Mama." This album makes the Japanese rock culture look like a picture of a picture. Personally, I think it would be a lot more interesting to see what kind of music Japan would come up with if the American influence wasn't as strong as it seems to be. Some of these tunes are just plain great, others are humorous in their contrivance -- but they're all damned interesting. - Greg Matherly

KATHODE RAY - Interior/Exterior Music (Kathode Ray Music, 1487 West 5th Ave. Suite 205, Columbus, Ohio 43212) This collection of cliché-ridden tunes makes it clear that the DIY ethic, like most things, can create as many problems as it solves. This bunch of well-meaning folks claim that Kathode Ray has created a TRUE ALTERNATIVE and state that this compilation truly fits that description, when actually they've expended a lot of effort to help a bunch of performers who are mostly mediocre at best. The only worthwhile act on this compilation is the Exploding Cargo Doors, whose winsome pop-punk sound and straightforward lyrics are quite good. As for the rest, the bands and artists which stick closer to standard folk and rock sounds (such as Fallout, Floyd's Orchard, the Weeds, and Michael Holland) actually are quite good musically. Sadly enough, they can't write lyrics to save their lives. For example, the Weeds' "Homecoming Queen" features this catchy little couplet: "I've never seen eyes so green/And no other mind could be harder to read..." But the real stinkers in this bunch are the compilation's many electronic music artists, who are still lost in the 1980s or still struggling to master Trent Reznor's most basic clichés. The brief liner notes to this release cheerfully thank the listener for "supporting independent music!" I always thought that the point was to support GOOD indie music, so save your hard-earned bread for a full-length by the Exploding Cargo Doors or some other worthy act. - Rob Thornton

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SKA DOWN HER WAY - Women Of Ska (Shanachie) Rude girls.. YUM! This comp features the ladies of ska. Some of the groups just use a woman to sing a song or two (Skankin Pickle, Fishbone) while others are fronted by gals. Although this CD is quite good, I did miss the Dance Hall Crashers, who should have been on this.

SKANKAHOLICS UNANIMOUS (Moon Ska) Not just another groovy comp from Moon - this one's got a theme: Alcohol, booze, hooch, getting blasted, that's the strand that connects this all together. I like my beer (sXe, I'm not) and my ska, so what's to lose? Standout tracks from Inspector 7, Pietasters, Arsenals, and more. Get this and the next round is on me! - Gary Mc.

SUBJECT TO CHANGE: A Compilation of Northwest Artists (Airforce Records) This compilation benefits Artists for a Hate Free America (AHFA) and gathers a real diversity of artists from Oregon and Washington; Everclear (with an acoustic version of "Heroin Girl"), Pete Drobe, Super Deluxe, and the Dandy Warhols are the more familiar names making an appearance. The Cool Nutz, 5 Fingers of Funk, and Hungry Mob provide a hip/hop/funk twist while Alyssa Burrows supplies the spoken word. Village Idiot offer a number reminiscent of early Faith No More regrouping to cover a Korn tune, and Donut Hole Smile take the piss out of Government Issue's "Fun Just Never Ends" and Minor Threat's "Minor Threat". Truly, Floater, and Pilot all piqued my interest, but the true hero of this compilation was Eric Matthews, a Nick Drake for the Nineties. Worth it for his track alone, not to mention the good deed you be doing as well. - Mike Harbin

THE SWINGING SOUNDS OF EASTER ISLAND (Red Iguana Records, PO Box 110210, Nutley, NJ 07110) A compilation of New Jersey bands who mainly stick to the pop punk side of things like Felix Frump. Most of the bands didn't jump out at me, except the band Puggle who play really soulful melodic indie rock in kinda "Tim" circa Replacements style or even like early NJ Loose stuff. I'd like to hear more from these guys. - Rick K.

TERRA SERPENTES (World-Serpent Distribution, 7-1-7 Seager Buildings, Brookmill Road, London SE8 4HL, United Kingdom) A budget priced double CD compilation featuring many of the World Serpent artists, such as Nurse with Wound, Current 93, Coil, Chris and Cosey, and so on. These are all exclusive tracks, too, according to the liner notes. A couple of hours of great, spooky, gloomy, experimental, and folky music appears here. This

was the first time I listened to some of the World Serpent artists, like Moon Lay Hidden Beneath a Cloud, In Gowan Ring, Elijah's Mantle, and others, and I was really pleasantly surprised at how good a lot of this stuff is. I actually have started buying up Moon Lay Hidden CDs because of how much their track here impressed me. This comp gets one of my highest recommendations. - Paul Silver

WELCOME TO LAS VEGAS...IT' ALL DOWNHILL FROM HERE (Flipside, PO Box 60790, Pasadena CA 91116) From the home of Wayne Newton comes the dark side (ha ha) of Las Vegas. This album highlights 10 bands that will never be seen playing at Caesar's Palace. It's got punk, hardcore, and ska styled bands. If these groups are representative of the whole scene, then I want to go there! Some favorites of mine were Bloodclub, Attaboy Skip and Cyanide Blues. - Gary McGarvey

WOOD PANEL PACER WITH MAGS (Too Many Records, PO Box 1222, Spokane WA 99210) First off, it should be made clear that this comp has 100 bands on it. 100 bands!!!!!! I figured this would take me days to get through, but somehow, it was over way too soon. The music here is great, raw punk, and all the songs are incredibly short. The compilation is broken up into one 76 band lp and one 24 band seven inch. Both pieces of vinyl throw you all over the punk map with a little bit of ska, pop, noise and hardcore, yet all the acts retain a true DIY spirit. There are a few noticable names here such as Less than Jake, Boba Fett Youth, J Church, Blanks 77, Boris the Sprinkler and Violent Society, just to name a few. My favorite aspect of this release was the amazing number of unknown and impressive bands that littered this monumental thing. Everytime I heard my favorite song, another would come on seconds later and top it. A few bands worth checking out are the Slobs, Seven Foot Spleen, Fred Mert, Operation:Cliff Caven, Reform Control, the Cripplers and Disgruntled Nation. Trust me, there are dozens more that I do not have the room to mention. If you like your punk poppy or crusty, heavy or goofy, you are destined to find something to love here. The record is accompanied by a 76 page booklet to enhance your listening pleasure by providing band info, explanations and occasionally lyrics. Obviously, with something of this size, not everything is going to work, and you are lucky that some songs are only a minute long. However, roughly 90% of the material here will leave you wildly entertained. I have no idea what the asking price will be for this thing, but buy it regardless of what it is. If you do not come away smiling, you truly have no hope. - Rich Quinlan

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[All fanzine reviews by Jim Testa. Prices shown are postpaid as listed in the zine, or my best guess.]

EDITOR'S CHOICE:

True to its name, *Attention Deficit Disorder* (or A.D.D. for short) serves up punk rock bands and comics in easy-to-digest, bite-sized chunks. Drinking beer and thinking about (but not actually having) sex loom large on the minds of the Tampa, Florida punks who put this comic book-sized zine together, although for issue #2 they also found time for short chats with the Bouncing Souls, Against All Authority, Weston, Blount, and the White Trash Debutantes. Typical questions run the gamut from the mundane to the ludicrous - "Who's your favorite pro wrestler?" or "Which is better - diarrhea or vomiting?" - while the zine's comic strip characters "Little Johnny Straightedge" and "Apathy Man" poke fun at familiar scene stereotypes. Even the columns - an indispensable staple of punkzines these days - run true to form, eschewing the usual mix of punk politics scene gossip for topics like "Beer: Why It's Good" and "Will's Drinking Tips." (7309 N. Huntley Ave., Tampa FL 33604; email adzine@gte.net)

SEND SOME STAMPS to Emily, 206 N Hampton Rd., Wilmington NC 28409 and ask for her minizines, Reasonably Martians and Skcratch. Emily's the girl we wrote about in the WE Fest article who takes nude photos of all the cute boys in bands.

AGREE TO DISAGREE #3 (PO Box 56057, Vancouver BC V5L 5E2 Canada, \$2) Neat little newsprint zine in that all-too-familiar MRR style, with columns in front, reviews in the back, and an interview (Swinging Utters) in the middle. They write about a lot of indie/underground Canadian bands, which I like, since it's usually hard to keep up with what's happening in the Great White North, and this issue has an interesting think piece on how punks can retain their identity in the wake of mainstream acceptance.

ALL THE ANSWERS #4 (207 W Clarendon Ave, Phoenix AZ 85013 \$2) This is amazing for a fourth issue - huge, offset-printed, and filled with good reading. Everything from a rant about Phyllis Schlafly's poisonous sexual politics to a long and informative interview with Avail, plus lots, lots more. Get it.

AMUSING YOURSELF TO DEATH #3 (PO Box 91934, Santa Barbara CA 93190, \$2) Zine gossip, zine history, and zine reviews. Much fresher and more informative (though less comprehensive) than Factsheet 5 these days. A good investment if you love finding new zines.

ANGELHEART #7 (J-P Muikku, Kielokatu 7as2, 80130 Joensuu, Finland, \$2) Ever wonder what punk is like in Finland? Angelheart, written in English, suggests that kids without access to a lot of shows and local bands obsess about their record collections even more than American kids. The interviews are with DIY labels or zines, the print is small, the printing is grainy, and the editorials deal with basic issues like freedom and alienation.

APPLE BROWN BETTY #2/3 (PO Box 245, Montvale NJ 07645, \$1) A very thin photocopied zine, but they get extra punk points for being the first zine I've seen to interview NYC teen heartthrobs Mooney Suzuki. They also talk to NJ's Scam and throw in some record reviews, all in #2. In #3, they interview Killer Kowalski, Sticker, and Mother Klown, which is cool; although the layouts don't show any improvement, which is not.

ASTERISM #6 (PO Box 6210, Evanston IL 60204, \$2) There are tons of science fiction zines, and God knows how many music zines... so why not a zine about music from outer space? That's the gist of Asterism. #6 includes interviews with some of the men who have written the music used in Star Trek TV shows and movies. But it's not all Trekkie-ness - the reviews get into all kinds of weird ambient, prog-rock, and techno stuff, from Tangerine Dream to Holger Czukay.

AUDIO-GLIPHIX #10/11 (PO Box 53123, Philadelphia PA 19105 \$2) Music beyond the airwaves. Translation: A zine about stuff you don't hear on the radio. And according to the editorial, they've added the dual mission of providing DIYers with useful information on managing their own careers. Issue #10 had more Philly coverage; #11 was heavy on women performers. Lots of non-traditional (for a local zine, anyway) music (world beat, hip hop, jazz). The writing is much better than average, although the layouts are a bit crowded and old fashioned.

BACKWASH #6 (Marc Hartzman, 843 Garden St. Apt B, Hoboken NJ 07030, \$2) Was Betty Boop anorexic? Who's cooler, Pam Grier or Pamela Anderson? Backwash tackles these and other cosmic questions on trash culture (including a section on blaxploitation flix,) then throws in a Skeleton Key interview and some record reviews. Kinda fun, although the ideas are usually better than the execution.

BAD STAIN #2 (PO Box 6869, Glendale AZ 85312, \$2) I've been reading

fanzines for 15 year and I think this is the first time I've ever read a column by a punk rocker who is also a dad, about what it's like raising a kid. Cool. Interviews with the Grabbers and HomeGrown, big photos, & record reviews.

BB GUN #3 (PO Box 5074, Hoboken NJ 07030, \$4) The third annual installment of Bob Bert's zine, featuring lots of irreverent interviews (often with cronies Bob has met through his long tenure in the indie rock scene as drummer for Sonic Youth, Pussy Galore, Bewitched, and the Chrome Cranks.) Shonen Knife, Sleater Kinney, Clem Burke of Blondie, Moe Tucker, Bis, Lydia Lunch, and the Demolition Dollrods are just a few of the bands you'll find Bob jabbering with this time out.

BIG BANG FANZINE #1 (Dave Liberation, PO Box 17746, Anaheim CA 92817) Sort of a catalog/zine from the way-cool Liberation Records. MRR-styled layouts and columns, and lotsa cool bands - any zine that does Propagandhi and the Pink Lincolns in the same issue is okay in my book! I don't agree with some of the punker-than-thou editorializing but the editors are really young, so let 'em rant.



BIG BULLY #1 (Rich Watters, 4461 Winderwood Cir., Orlando FL 32835, \$1& stamp) A good first effort from this Florida teen. The editorials tend to be pretty simple (PETA is good, support local bands, life sucks,) but there are a few nice touches. Rich reprints a newspaper article on the local Marilyn Manson show and then handwrites his own commentary in the margins. He also prints the disciplinary notice he got at school for wearing a wallet chain. That kind of inspiration and a little more experience and this zine should be rocking.

✓ **BITE ME**, Spring 1997 (6038 Hayes Ave. #1A, Los Angeles CA 90042, \$2) Good-natured punk zine that mixes in some rock. Interviews with Ten Foot Pole, Good Riddance, Flambookey (who?), lots of reviews, and a clever piece on aliens. Funny National Enquirer style cover too.

BLAME IT ON THE FAT KID #1 (PO Box 356, River Edge NJ 07661, two stamps) Charles Maggio of Gern Blandsten Records puts this minizine out, and besides label info, it lets Charles vent about being a fat kid in the punk scene. His letters to bands about their recent records are hilarious.

THE BRAINTEASER #2/3 (552 78TH Street, North Bergen NJ 07047, \$1) Nothing fancy here, just a photocopied, bare bones stab at a punkzine by some punk kids from the County as Jersey Beat (which is certainly nice to see.) Issue 2 has some reviews, the confessions of a 22-year old who just saw Star Wars for the first time, and a short scene report that includes some cool local bands. #3 includes rants about Howard Stern and Jenny McCarthy, a long show review, more record reviews, and a very short interview with No. Bergen noisecore punks Chew Pamela.

BRAND X #6 (66 William St. Fredericton NB E3A 4V8 Canada, \$2) I'm not sure where Fredericton is but obviously the kids there have a lot of time on their hands. This is all utter stuff and nonsense, photo offset printed with a color cover so it looks really nice. It's just really warped. But fun to read.

CHANGE ZINE #9 (PO Box 966, Norwalk CT 06856;) Editor Pat West just moved to NYC so I'm not sure about the address. Email me for an update before you order... which you should because this zine rules. Testosterone-pumped interviews with Floor Punchers, Avail, C.R., Cable, an unintentionally hilarious interview with Blake of Jawbreaker (just before they broke up) done by a rather naïve young punk rocker who asks all sorts of embarrassing questions, and all that basketball crap that Pat likes so much. (Heck, I'd like basketball too if I was as tall and skinny as he is. If you want to take him on in a pickup game, he's hanging around the Tompkins Sq. Park courts these days.)

CHICKEN IS GOOD FOOD #2 (PO Box 642634, San Francisco CA 941654 \$1.75) A zine of random nonsense that's a lot of fun: Really Bad Porno Names, a rant about stupid people, Things That Are White Trash, and instructions on how to play the game King Beer (Object; To get as drunk as humanly possible, fondle and/or kiss people and eventually fall over.) Get the idea?

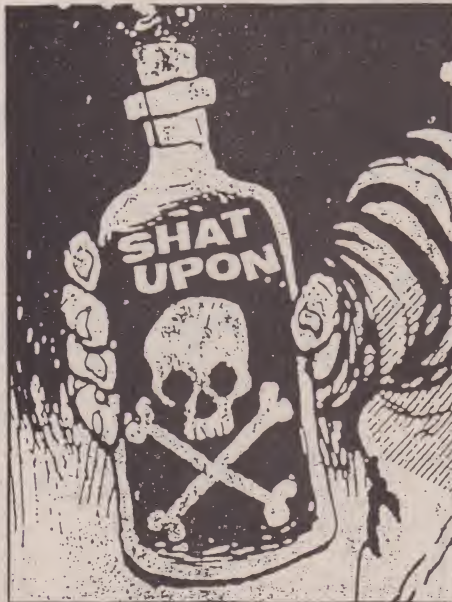
CHOLESTEROL JUNKIE #4 (PO Box 116, Long Lake MN 55356, \$1) A scrappy if sloppy half-sized, photocopied zine. The editor does a mail interview with George Tabb and pulls online pranks (by pretending to be a lesbian and a born-again Christian in chat mode.) There's a page of Minor Threat lyrics, a review of *Rollerblade* (this issue's video pick), reviews, and a few other things, all with a bratty sense of humor. I got a chuckle.

COOL BEANS #6 (3181 Mission #113, San Francisco CA 94110, \$4) Comes with a 5-song 7-inch that includes Harry Pussy, Kelley Deal, and Fuck. They all get interviews, as does a Frisco cab driver (who has

some hairy stories to tell) and Mary Lou Lord. Good reviews section, nice layouts. A steal.

CRANK #6 (PO Box 633, Prince St. Sta., NYC 10012, \$3) Editor Jeff Koyen conveniently includes a page of quips in this issue for lazy zine reviewers, but I'll skip over those and get right to the meat. Crank doesn't review records or interview bands. Basically it's an outlet for Koyen's pitbull personality quirks (hence the title) and always a good read. Issue 6's highlights include a guide to Elvis films with more trivia than you'd ever want to know, favorite teenage boy beat-off flicks from the Eighties, and Koyen's side of the story about the rise and fall of *Highball*, a short-lived stab at creating a marketable fanzine (which proves my contention that money and zines don't mix.) Crank is especially useful if you have a drinking problem or a death wish - #6 includes a guide to which over the counter medicines don't mix well with alcohol, recommended vitamins for heavy drinkers, and a list of alternative suicide methods, with their pros and cons (my favorite: Hedonism.)

CRIMSON LEER #5/THE BLACK CLOVE TRADESMEN #3 Split Zine (8722 Rte. 80, Fabius NY 13063, \$2) I assume these two upstate zines combined resources to save on postage and printing, but they are both lit zines with mostly poetry and some short stories, clipart grafix, and no music coverage to speak of. I did like the haiku about Syracuse (written at the tail end of a particularly horrible winter.) "Fuck clouds and fuck snow/It's all we know in this damned place/ Kill Syracuse now."



DANSE ASSEMBLY MONTHLY (DAMn!) #13 (email damnet@aol.com) Since Mick Hale didn't do a Danse Assembly column for this Jersey Beat, you'll have to catch up on all the latest techno, ambient, industrial and so force by getting a copy of his zine. Or you can read the interview with Mick and his band Crocodile Shop in this issue. DAMN #13 features Metalheadz, Collide, a look back at 1996, & reviews.

ETCH Vol. 3 No. 1 (PO Box 10132, Lansing MI 48901 \$1) Lots of short band interviews (Motor Dolls, Delta 72, Man Or Astroman, East River Pipe, Jennyanykind), letters, and reviews. Solid writing with lots of enthusiasm.

EVENTIDE #2 (225 Riveredge Rd., Tinton Falls NJ 07724 \$2) Good looking new newsprint emocore zine with some good interviews (Cast Iron Hike, Sweetbelly Freakdown, Ink & Dagger, Heft, Project Kate, and more,) very good reviews section, and lots of photos.

FOE #36 (Frank Pearn Jr., PO Box 4, Bethlehem PA 18016 \$2) Greetings from the Lehigh Valley. Foe is both a zine and mailorder distro so if you're interested in the punk scene from this neck of the woods, check this out. This issue has interviews with Digger, Walter Krug (3 funny guys who posed for their photos in cheerleader's outfits,) Latex Generation, Neurosis, Refused, and a DIY piece on turning old punk t-shirts into pillows. Lots more including lotsa reviews and a photo of a naked girl throwing up, so you really need to order a copy.

GET A LIFE #7 (Mike Frame, 147 So. 1000 East #4, Salt Lake City UT 84102 \$1) Zero effort on the layouts and only a little more on the Groovie Ghoulies interview (no photos). Top Ten Lists from his friends. I liked the editorial on why he loves music and the road trip diary, which had a lot of enthusiasm.

GO METRIC #7 (30-28 34TH St., Astoria NY 11103, \$1) The official fanzine of the band Egghead, which means this is goofy as heck and you'll either find it loveable or annoying, much like their band.

HANGING LIKE A HEX #7 (201 Maple Lane, No. Syracuse NY 132121, \$1) A nice mix of punk & HC - not every zine would interview Earth Crisis and Rocket From The Crypt, as well as Coalesce and Jason

Farrell (ex-Swiz, now in Bluetip and Sweetbelly Freakdown.) Reviews and lots of good photos too.

HELLBENDER #10 (PO Box 547, Vails Gate NY 12584, \$2) Just this side of being great, Hellbender is a straight-up punk/hc zine that does a good job but still with room to grow. Good photos, okay layouts, some good writing, and knowledgeable reviews.

HIGH SCHOOL PSYCHOPATH #1 (PO Box 804, Wayzata MN 55391 2 stamps) The editor's name is Mike Bad Attitude, the title comes from a Screeching Weasel song, and the first page has a photo of Mike taking a Pinhead to his senior prom. Gotta love it. Issue #1 has Parasites, a funny road trip story, and reviews of all the Ramones tribute LPs (Screeching Weasel, Queens, Vindictives, Parasites, etc).

IN EFFECT #10 (Chris Wynne, 119-16 8th Ave, College Pt NY 11356; \$2) IE is looking good - glossy cover & lots more pages than I remember. Dedicated to the NY/HC scene, inside you get a shitload of interviews and photos of muscular, bald young men - and a few old-timers, like the reunited Agnostic Front. There's also a ton of reviews, including a huge demo tape section (which really brings back memories of the early NY/HC scene, when how cool you were depended on whose new demo tape you could score first.)

IN THE TRADITION OF RANDOM THOUGHTS (the Terrorist Transmission Company, 49 Calais Rd., Randolph NJ 07869, send stamps) This is d.michael mcnamara's "zine," which can be anything from just a sticker with an interesting slogan to a minizine of enigmatic postcards from a fictional journey. Send him some stamps and see what you get back.

JOURNALS OF THE INSANE #4 (PO Box 7152, Garden City NY 11530, \$1) Slim and frankly uninspired newsprint punk and ska zine, with unexciting layouts and very little personal content. Part I has Suicide Machines, Screw 32, Pacifier, Let's Go Bowling, Unwritten Law interviews and reviews, Part II is poetry.

KIT 'ZINE (27 E. Central Ave R5, Paoli PA 19301, \$1) K.I.T. is short for Keeping In Touch, which editor J.D. Harvey does with this 4-page newsletter. One-sentence record and zine reviews, and an essay about a class on Spirituality which has apparently changed the editor's life.

KNUCKLEBOY PRESS #5 (6 Balmoral Lane, Scotch Plains NJ 07076 \$2) Mike Civins and his pals publish this half-sized zine from his basement. In fact, Knuckleboy seems less like a zine and more like a way of life for Mike and his high school friends. They all get into the act - interviewing punk and ska bands or just sounding off about their wretched teenage lives. Knuckleboy Press says that baseball has been ruined by greed so we should all go bowling instead. It's that kind of wisdom that gives me hope for the future of this country.

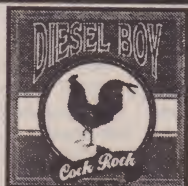
A LIGHT IN THE ATTIC #2 (PO Box 343, Merrick NY 11566, 2 stamps) A newsletter zine in the old Bullshit Monthly tradition. Most LI scene news and hardcore reviews, not much personal stuff.

MAD CHATTER #2 (Fifi, PO Box 58, Red Bank NJ 07701, \$1) Fifi uses her zine to tell you what's she's been doing - books she's read, movies and records she likes, shows she's seen. You can also find out about the infamous Dr. Ducky Doolittle, the pornographic lady clown.

MO'S WIDE WORLD OF PUNK #5 (120 Ninth Ave, Haddon Hts NJ 08035, \$2) Queens, Teen Idols, and Springheeled Jack are featured in this scruffy but enjoyable zine from suburbia. I'd like to see them expand the scene reports since there's a lot going on in that part of Jersey that Jersey Beat can't get to.

MOTION SICKNESS #4 (6221 Delmar Blvd. #202 Rear, St Louis MO 63130 \$2) Newsprint punkzine in the PP/MRR model. Columns, interviews (Screw 32, Boris The Sprinkler, Aaron from Probe zine, Bouncing Souls, yet another Descendents interview and lots more, including the editor's road trip to Chicago. Plenty to read, lots of photos, and good writing.

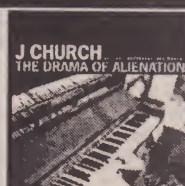
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THE MUCKRAKER #6 (David McMahon, 6019a Idaho St., Oakland CA 94608) A mini-mini zine filled with short poems, stories, and a diary. It's actually a lot of fun to flip through.

MUDDLE #10 (PO Box 621-0621, Ithaca NY 14851 \$2) I love Muddle. It has columns that sort of look like MRR columns, except they're short and sweet and don't care about Punk Politics and who's PC and who's not (except for Jay's "He's Really Evil" column, which is a force unto itself.) Muddle's columns mostly deal with how boys and girls in their early twenties cope with growing up. And there are band interviews, where someone asks a band for their favorite Star Wars character and how they earn money to keep the band going. The photos in the new issue are especially good. And there are funny things like the make-believe Fox soap opera about punk teens in a small town. Lots of reviews. Star Wars stuff. An Elvis Costello pinup. You need this zine.

NO IDEA #12 (\$8) The 32-band compilation CD that comes with this CD is worth more than \$8, so it's even more of a steal that the fanzine itself is so good. The highlights are the Dan O'Mahoney and Karp interviews. This issue has a lot of comix as well as the usual high-flying live punk band photos and reviews. And what other punkzine would have the balls to interview Iron Maiden? No Idea is a must.

NOISES FROM THE GARAGE #5 (Brian Marshall, 8811 Rue Riviera #3A, Indianapolis IN 46226 \$2) Pretty much like it says - garage rock, mostly, fueled by the obsessive rants of the Noise Junkie (aka Brian Marshall.) You gotta love a zine whose opening editorial encourages you to boo if the opening band at a show sucks. Coverage this ish includes the Migraines, Teengenerate, Woggles, Oblivians, Man... Or Astroman?, and lots more goodies, including a big reviews section heavily loaded with vinyl.

OCULUS #6.2 (PO Box 148, Hoboken NJ 07030, \$1) Pithy, erudite, and entertaining, Oculus is always a worthwhile pickup. This issue's highlights include an interview with Jersey City's sad-pop heartthrobs Spent and a conversation with Ira Robbins, editor of the Trouser Press Record Guides. Issue #6.3 - The Wide Screen Edition, meaning you have to turn this on its side to read it. Above average writing and the occasional thought-provoking essay (this issue includes an overview of soul music) always make this slim zine a winner.

ORNERY BOY #7 (PO Box 19933, Cincinnati OH 45219, \$1) An 8 page tabloid newspaper zine basically dedicated to the rants of the editor, Michael Ornerly, who talks about everything from pro wrestling to why he hates all the frat jocks at his college. There's also a feature on Jack The Ripper, some record reviews, a Mad Lib style interview with 30 Foot Tall that I couldn't read because the type was too small, and my favorite part, the Michael Ornerly Interview, where the editor interviews himself.

OUTCAST MESSIAH - Words By LOTS #5 (Cory Clemetson, 3369 N Ely Highway, Alma MI 48801, \$1) If you read the piece on the WE Festival in this issue, you'll find mention of two raggamuffin squatter kids who showed up and stayed for the week. One of them was Cory Clemetson, aka LOTS (Lord Of The Squatters.) I noticed that he usually walked around with a notebook but I never knew why. Then out of the blue I get this zine, which is a collection of his poetry. This is amazing stuff - moving, vivid, literate, with an inherent rhythm (like the lyrics to hip hop) that you rarely find in free verse poetry. It taught me a big lesson about judging people on appearances. If I ever run into LOTS again (and I bet I will,) we're going to have some conversation.

POLY MANIFESTO #4 (Kevin Burns, 1805 Lima Dr., San Luis Obispo CA 93405, \$2) I could have lived a happy life without another editorial on animal rights, but I loved the piece (by heterosexual "Matt Nice") about going into a gay bar on a dare and getting hit on. There's also an interview with a local band and a local homeless person, plus a few reviews. A nice change of pace.

PUBERTY STRIKE #1 (Seth, 2007 E 3rd St. Tucson AZ 85719 \$1) The editor is a 16 year old boy and this zine is for teenagers who want to go on strike (meaning, not get any older.) There's all kinds of fun teen stuff, like reviews of the editor's high school teachers, and a recipe page on how to make sno-cones, crushes, Garbage Pail Kids, Teen-C bands, and lots more. Also ask for a copy of "Heroes Of Today" minizine if you write.

PUSSY #1 (PO Box 2771 MTSU, Murfreesboro TN 37132 \$1) Jersey Beat regulars Greg Matherly and Dave Brock collaborated on this nutty zine, which is filled with odd little comics and weird stories, puzzles, and nonsense. If you're idea of humor is poking fun at intellectuals or writing parodies of Kerouac, check it out.

RAPID FIRE MAGAZINE #15 (RD 1 Box 3370, Starksboro VT 05487, \$2) A meat and potatoes punkzine (typewritten pages, xeroxed photos) with a lot of show reviews (intermixed with motorcycling stories, it seems) and interviews with No Use For A Name and a local band called Twist 160. The layouts are about as exciting as a term paper but I still enjoyed reading it cover to cover.

RATIONAL INQUIRER #8 (2050 w 56 St. #32-221, Hialeah FL 33016, \$4.50) This zine is stylin'. Cool cover cover, insides packed with solid band interviews (Blanks 77, Rocket From The Crypt, Voodoo Glow Skulls, Youth Brigade, Cows, and lots more,) tons of reviews, and it comes with a 37-track CD compilation that lets you sample the catalogs of seven cool indie-punk labels (including Dr. Strange, Hopeless, Shredder, Liquid Meat, Rhetoric, Grand Theft Audio, and Stiffpole.) It's worth the \$4.50 just for the CD but the zine is nothing to sneeze at either.

RIOT DUCK #1 (Eva Silverman, 501 James Way, Wyckoff NJ 07481, \$1) Eva is a 16-year old riot grrl and reading her zine is a little like taking a peek at your kid sister's diary. There's the piece where she worships Thurston Moore from the pit, or the picture of the infamous CBGB bathrooms (even scuzzier than you've heard,) the list of cool places she likes to visit, the disappointing Queers show she went to, and her feelings on the changes at Maxwells, and so on. It's kind of messy and pasted together - but so are most 16 year olds' lives.

ROCKTOBER #17 (1507 E 53rd St. #617, Chicago IL 60615 \$3) This retro zine looks back at the careers of Andre Williams and the Walker Brothers, and has a big section on rock magazines from the 70's, including vintage Creem and an unpublished Lester Bangs piece on Nico.

SCENESTER #3 (Dan Gross, 124 Crosshill Rd, Wynnewood PA 19096 \$2) Slim newsprint zine. Interviews with Sweden's Refused, Social D, Texas Is The Reason, Sense Field, and B-movie director Frank Henenlotter ("Frankenhoofer.") I liked the Face To Face interview: Q. So you're sellouts? How's it feel? A: Great."

SCHTUFF #6 (7110 Westminster St., Powell River BC Canada V8A 1C6 \$2) I think if Jason Schreuers lived a little closer, we'd be best friends. Reading Schtuff is like talking about music with your best buddy. This issue has some unusual stories, too - an interview with a professional motivational speaker, a review of a local music festival, why cops hate you, and short profiles of 15 zine editors on what inspires them. Plus reviews, photos, yadda yadda yadda. This is a good one, check it out.

SCRAWL #3 (PO Box 205, NYC 10012, \$3) This zine is so good (and only on its third issue!) that it's almost embarrassing to us old-timers. Gorgeous color cover, amazing photos (and layouts) by Sam Lahoz, and tres' cool interviews with Melting Hopefuls, Bali Girls, Squat, Avail, Elliot Sharp, Lydia Lunch, and covergirls Rasputina.

SCREED #8 (PO Box 9254, Cincinnati OH 45209, \$1) I think of this as the Sound Views of Cincinnati - interviews, reviews, and photos of Cincy bands, plus a good DIY piece to help bands write a useful bio to send out with your CD or demo tape.

SHOELACE #10 (PO Box 7952, W. Trenton NJ 08628, \$1.75) An old reliable, published irregularly by Trenton guy Erik Szantai and former Trenton guy (now living in upstate NY) Bob Conrad. Books, shows, records, and zines get reviewed in those bold, crisp layouts that were all the rage when the first wave of kids with computers started doing offset zines in the mid Eighties. Bob and Erik always have something interesting to say, which makes seeing Shoelace turn up in the mail like bumping into an old friend.

SEARCH OF SERENITY Jan. '97 (PO Box 818, Helena AL 35080, \$1) Well done newsprint punkzine. I got a kick out of the lead editorial on the evils of testosterone. Until someone figures out how to separate punk and adolescence, I don't think this problem is just going to go

away! Rants, reviews, vacation photos, & an Earth Crisis interview that doesn't suck up to the vegan reich ("how do you feel about people who come to your shows to make fun of you?"). Also short interviews with Strongarm and Damnation AD, plus lots of local band pics.

SECOND NATURE #5 (PO Box 11543, Kansas City MO 64138, \$2) An excellent punkzine focusing on the emo tip, with modern layouts and good writing. The photo offset printing on heavy bond really sets off the action photos, and there are a lot of them. The interviews go beyond the usual tame questions, too. This issue includes ninironspitfire, Texas Is The Reason, Promise Ring, Cycle, Harvest, a trip to the Kansas City Music Fest, and lots of reviews.

SHAT UPON #3 (Smetanka, PO Box 9081, Missoula MT 59802 \$2) Missoula might not have much of a scene but there's no shortage of imagination. This newsprint zine just oozes original ideas - like the editor having his dad do the punk record reviews, to the piece on two independent film crews coming to town, to the memoir of a grade school misadventure, a long think piece on the future of hardcore, a visit to Sumatra, confessions of a marching band geek, sexy supermarket labels... I mean, every time you turn the page, there's another cool idea. You really need to check this out and read the damn thing cover to cover and then think about why your fanzine is so boring. (I know I did!)

SMOKES LIKE A FISH #2 (140 Cadman Place #7E, Brooklyn NY 11201 \$2) You'd think that between fielding interview requests for Loud Lucy and fighting off all the teen mags who want photo shoots with Hunk, a couple of Geffen publicists like Jim Merlis and Dennis Dennehey wouldn't have time to put together a fanzine. They interview a postal worker on why mail delivery stinks, write tongue in cheek record reviews, visit SXSW, and report on scams and prank phone calls. The only thing is that SLAF is so full of in-jokes that you need to be in the music biz to understand that these guys aren't (a.) at all serious or (b.) braindead.

SOUND VIEWS #45 (96 Henry Street #5W, Brooklyn NY 11201-171 \$2) Great cover by cartoonist Danny Hellman, whose interviewed inside. Plus the usual excellent cross section of NYC underground rock, from ska to gutter punk. This issue also marks the start of a new series - profiles of classic but forgotten NYC bands. This issue: The Fugs. Can you say "boobsalot?" (See, I didn't forget.)

SPONGE MONKEY #4 & 5 (Kelly E. & Chris Joy, 416 Jeff Davis St., Waveland MS 39576, \$2) The layouts aren't going to win any awards but there's some good reading. #4 includes interviews with a bunch of teens, asking what it's like growing up punk in Mississippi. I've always wondered about that - how do kids in places like that wind up doing zines and bands when there's no readymade scene to get them started? Besides that, they interview Pansy Division, Unwound, and throw in some short stories and reviews. #5 includes a long interview with Cub, shorter pieces on Melt Banana and Delta 72, and the usual extras.

SUB-PULSE #3 (2412 Slayback St., Urbana IL 61802, \$2) Once you get past the MRR-styled columns, the layouts and writing in this newsprint punkzine are first class. A piece on Alternative Tentacles' censorship trial offers an important lesson about not taking the First Amendment for granted. Interviews with No Empathy's Marc Ruvolo, Voodoo Glow Skulls, Less Than Jake, and Bouncing Souls, reviews, original comix. Well worth checking out.

SUBURBAN HOME #6 (1750 30th St. #365, Boulder CO 80301, \$1) A good little newsprint punkzine in the MRR tradition - DIY tips, interviews with Falling Sickness, Funeral Oration, and the Nobodys, and reviews. It could use a few more photos but otherwise a good deal for a buck.

SUBURBAN VOICE #40 (PO Box 2746, Lynn MA 01903; \$4 and comes with a 7-inch EP) It's always a good day around my house when a new Suburban Voice shows up. Tons of interviews and reviews, great photos, and the bonus of a 7 inch EP (this time with Violent Society, Eveready, Halflings, and New Sweet Breath.) Interviews this ish include Ben Weasel, Chixdiggit, Electric Frankenstein, Fluf, MDC, Misfits, Wretched Ones, and No FX (who says Fat Mike won't do interviews? He just won't do interviews with magazines he doesn't respect, like Spin and Rolling Stone.)

SUGARDADDY #2 (PO Box 328, Zieglerstown PA 19492, \$1) A half size zine that tries hard to be a little different. Punk, rap, and sex in equal doses, including fiction, interviews, rants, and reviews.

SUPPLICANT #2 (PO Box 8619, New York NY 10116 \$2) Another good new NYC newsprint zine in the Punk Planet/MRR style - columns, reviews, and interviews. The Descendents and Swinging Utters are the marquee bands; also profiles of Albany's Disenchanted, Long Island's Millhouse, and a profile of WFMU dj Pat Duncan, plus some rants and political pieces.

TOILET WATER (213 Arizona Ave., Atlantic City NJ 08401 \$2) Wow, a zine from the Jersey shore. The editor's name is Mr. Furley and this has lots of fun punk attitude, with all the usuals - letters, band interviews, and reviews. The live reviews talk more about alcohol consumption and encounters with assholes than the music ("I was getting drunk on melon-ball shots and Miller Lite while Milkman was telling me I was gonna puke. We got nice & toasty while interviewing Dave the guitarist as well as doing shots with the saxophonist, who liked something like Kenny G, Michael Bolton, and Byran Adams. Next thing we know we're on the guest list and eating mozzarella sticks courtesy of Rider U.") In other words, this rocks.

TOXIC FLYER #23 (PO Box 39158, Baltimore MD 21212 \$1) Newsprint zine which, although it's from Baltimore, seems to concentrate on the NYC gutterpunk scene - Speedball Baby gets interviewed, and Clowns For Progress and the Wives show up in the live reviews. Newsprint with kind of a cluttered, messy feel, but plenty to read plus a photo gallery of old & new punk bands.

✓ **UNDER 18 #3** (1215 Ronan Ave, Wilmington, CA 90744 \$2) Wild cut-and-paste layouts dedicated to grassroots underground punk - Oi Polloi, Romantic Gorilla, Ciril, Fanatics, and lots of other bands you've probably never heard of, plus puzzles, poetry, rants, and reviews.

UNDER THE VOLCANO #37 (PO Box 236, Nesconset NY 11767, \$2) Another mainstay on the NYC/Long Island scene. This issue has the McCrackins, a chat with Mel of Shredder Records, a good interview with Cheap Trick, plus the usuals. #38 has an interview with Jello Biafra (back with another Lard release,) Barkmarket, Cleanser, Kiss It Goodbye, and a profile of Johann's Face Records.

URBAN RAG #23 (PO Box 481, New Tripoli PA 18066, \$1) Most of this is Jon Ment's coverage of last fall's CMJ Convention with a lot of record reviews.

VICTIMS OF CIRCUMSTANCE (148 Papscoe Rd, Hewitt NJ 07421 \$1) Well, ya got your two editors named Angry Adam and Anarcho Bob, ya got ya basic photocopied pages, cut 'n' paste layouts, and nearly-illegible handwritten rants and reviews. Smells like teen spirit.

VIOLATION FEZ #6 (Leah Ryan, PO Box 2228, NYC 10108, \$1) Lots of short stories - weird but true tales sent in by readers (including one from my days as an altar boy!), a story about spending the summer in a frat house and starting a phony religion, and a girl explains why she is not a nun. Diverting reading.

VISION ON #12 (27 Springbank Croft, Holmfirth, W. Yorks HD7 1LW ENGLAND, \$3) One of the few British zines I read regularly. Editor Steve mixes U.S. and British punk and alt rock, from NY Loose, Girls Against Boys, and the Descendents to cool new Britpunk bands like Toast and Turtlehead. Steve also has mail interviews with Ben Weasel and the Queers and a good reviews section.

ZINE WORLD #2 (924 Valencia St., San Francisco CA 94110 \$3) Zines, zines, and more zines in a half-size format. The reviews are pithy and not afraid of honesty ("I HATE YOU #5: This grumbly little zine is so upset with humanity it makes my teeth hurt.") Zine junkies, don't bother waiting for the next Factsheet 5, order this NOW!

When writing for fanzines, it's always nice to include a note saying where you saw the zine reviewed, and it never hurts to include a little extra for postage, especially with the \$1 zines.

JERSEY BEAT BACK ISSUES

#40 (Summer 1990) WAS SOLD OUT BUT WE FOUND A FEW MORE COPIES OF THIS ONE!! Kryst The Conqueror (ex Misfits,) our first interview with Jawbreaker (circa Unfun,) our last interview with Adrenalin OD, our first look inside ABC No Rio's hardcore matinees, and lots more.

#41 (Fall 1990) YO LA TENGO, Nine Inch Nails, Crawlpppy, Lost tour diary, Chikara

#42 (Winter 1991) WEEN: The Untold Story; Lucy Brown, Anthrophobia, Invasion Of The Generic Funk Weenies Pt. 1

#43 (Summer 1991) BEWITCHED, Butthole Surfers, Junk Monkeys, Springhouse, Deviators

#44 (Fall/Winter 1991) SINGLES: Special Report On The Underground World of 7-Inch Vinyl; Rollins, Fiendz

#45 (Winter 1992) NIRVANA: Talkin' Shit With The Gods Of Grunge; Undead, Our American Cousins

#46 (Summer 1992) 10TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE; False Prophets: A History Of NY Hardcore, Firehose, Lester Bangs interview, Trusty, Sweet Lizard Illtet, L7

#47, #48 (Fall 1992) SOLD OUT

#49 (Summer 1993) NEW JERSEY: A State Of The State Report; Whatever Happened To Hoboken?, New Brunswick Scene Report, South Jersey - White Trash Heaven, NJ Hip Hop, Hardcore Scene Report by Mat Gard, Black Train Jack, Sons Of Elvis

#50 (Winter 1994) GIRLS AGAINST BOYS, Nudeswirl, Garden Variety, G.G. Allin obituary, Cucumbers, New York's Club Scene: A Special Report

#51 (Spring/Summer 1994) IS PUNK DEAD? The Selling Of Punk: Green Day, Jawbox, Lawrence Livermore, Kurt Cobain obituary, Sinkhole

#52 (Fall/Winter 1994) NEW BANDS ISSUE: The Figgs, Deadguy, Bouncing Souls, Madball, Ex-Vegas, WOOL, Sound Advice, lots more

#53 (Winter 1995) MAKING IT IN NEW YORK: A Special Report on the special problems and challenges faced by bands in NYC - interviews with Quicksand, Jeff Buckley, Xanax 25, plus an in-depth interview with punk legend Mike Watt, plus local bands, reviews, photos, columns, etc.

#54 (Summer 1995) THE DO-IT-YOURSELF ISSUE: Tips on DIY projects like recording at home, putting on shows in your basement, running a DIY labels, & publishing a fanzine, including interviews with local notables who Do It Themselves; American Standard interview, NJ Hardcore Scene update, the usual reviews, photos, columns, and so on.

#55 (Fall/Winter 1995) OLD PUNKS: Into Another, All, Civ, and Keith Morris of Circle Jerks talk about the current state of punk; plus Jawbreaker on their major label LP, local bands Urchins and Mars Needs Women, zillions of reviews, and all the other cool stuff.

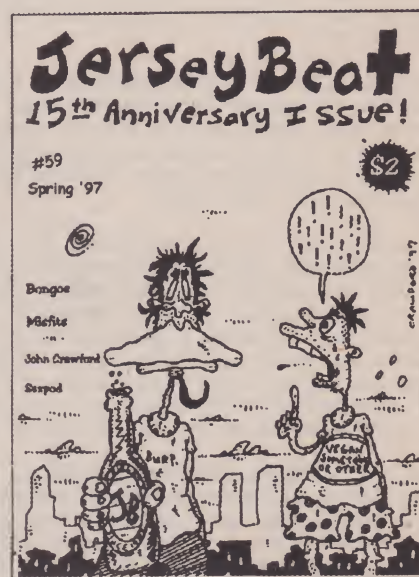
#56 (Spring 1996) ABC NO RIO: The Rise & Fall (& Rise Again) of NYC's only all-ages, DIY punk collective; plus up-to-date interviews with Mike Bullshit, Chisel, and Hell No; Melting Hopefuls, Resolve, Solution AD, a Queens/Cletus tour diary by their roadie; SXSW '96; and all the usual stuff.

#57 (Summer 1996) SUBURBIA! Murphy's Law, Weston, Kid With Man Head, Trip 66, Illness, Footstone, Tommie Griggz, Boss Jim Getts, All Fall Down, and lots more.

#58 (Fall 1996) SCREECHING WEASEL: The Jersey Beat Interview; Descendents, Killer Kowalski, Railroad Earth; Tour diaries from Kid With Man Head, Tommie Griggz, and Thirsty; Donny The Punk, RIP; Lollapalooza '96; CMJ '96; plus all the usual stuff

#59 (Spring '97) 15th Anniversary Issue! Where Have All The Bongos Gone?, MISFITS, John Crawford, Sexpod, A look back at 15 years of Jersey Beat, and lots, lots more. JUST A FEW OF THESE LEFT!

ALL BACK ISSUES ARE \$2 POSTPAID. SEND CASH OR MONEY ORDER PAYABLE TO JIM TESTA TO: JERSEY BEAT, 418 GREGORY AVE, WEEHAWKEN NJ 07087



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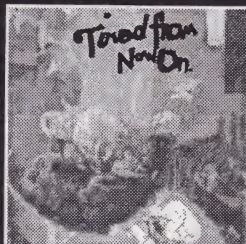
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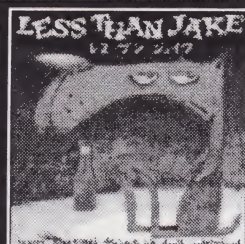
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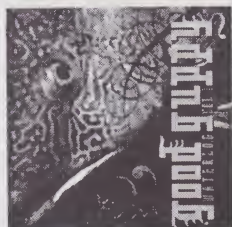
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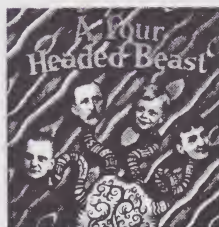
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